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# Sea Stories

MAY 1930

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EARLY DAYS

BY COMMANDER  
BISSETT, R.N.R.



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BISSETT, R.N.R.

1930

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nk—how disgusting!”



**I**F you, or any member of your family have the slightest evidence of dandruff, we urge you to try this treatment, which has benefited thousands:—

Simply douse Listerine, full strength, on the hair. Vigorously massage the scalp forward, backward, up and down. Repeat this treatment for several days, using a little olive oil in case your hair is excessively dry.

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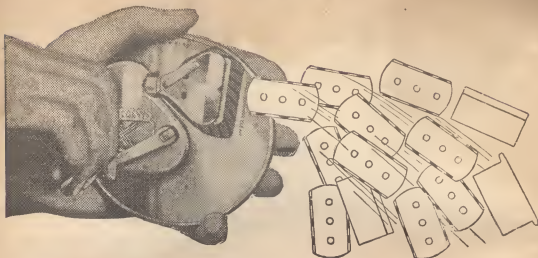
strength Listerine is powerful against germs—though so safe it may be used in any body cavity.

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# Sea Stories

The Seafarer's B. V. Page title

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Volume XX

MAY, 1930

Number 3

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Monthly publication, Vol. XX, No. 3, May, 1930, published by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 75-77 Broadway Avenue, New York City. Second-class, Postpaid, Second-class, Vol. XX, No. 3, May, 1930, published by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 75-77 Broadway Avenue, New York City. Copyright, 1930, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1930, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Printed at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1909. Copyright, 1930, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York.

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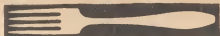
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## Splashers vs. Lollers

A bit of quiet research among the bathers of America has revealed two rival camps of behavior—

The handsome gentleman who heads the first group believes that bathing should be in the active mood. At 7:00 a. m. he becomes unseen but *heard*. From the bathroom come the echoes of hearty splashes and noises that sound like a floor polishing machine. (Our hero is stirring up a fancy Ivory frosting with a stiff-bearded bath brush!)

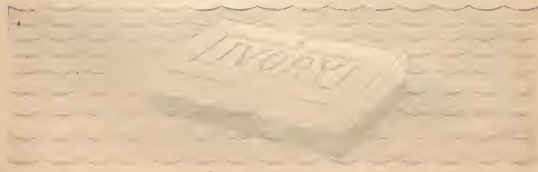
The spokeswoman for group 2 shudders at the thought of such athletic goings-on! She insists that bathing should be a restful interlude

in water as warm as a rippleless sea. And Ivory will float like a lily pad in this bland pool of content . . .

Frankly, the debate of *splashers vs. lollers* is too delicate a matter for us to pass upon. So we merely remind you that both leading schools of bathing have nominated Ivory! Ivory dares the splashers to duck it . . . and it drifts into a loller's hands. Its whole-hearted foam rinses away as lightly as dandelion fluff in a breeze. And it leaves both the skin and temper as smooth as velvet. There's no debate among bath-loving Americans on the merits of Ivory—they all *agree* that it is fine, pure soap!

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# The City Of Refuge

## By Millard Ward



The sea didn't take Jack and the boatswain because it wasn't ready for them.

**T**HE quay made a thirty-yard stretch of gray, darker-than-moonlit water, between the *Cape Sable's* quarter and the rattling brightness of Pratt Street. But the freighter's boatswain, Oscar Skram, leaning over the poop rail, was watching something in the thirty yards of gray. The thing was a man who stared at the ship without moving; a man Oscar knew quite well—Jack Morgan, the jailbird. Oscar had seen him as he passed under the last of the street lights; big, keenly powerful body, and young face half hidden by short brown beard. His usual guarded alertness had been evident as he crossed Pratt Street; now he seemed to

find relief in dim moonlight, standing there, looking at the ship.

Not that the *Cape Sable* was much to look at; the first extraordinary thing the boatswain had noticed about Jack had been that he wanted to sail in her. He had stepped ashore a week before from the huge *Eastern Trader*, discharging cargo from the Far East at the same pier with the *Cape Sable*, and with five months' pay presumably intact in his pocket, had asked for another job. The mate had been glad to get him, because any one from a crack ship like the *Eastern Trader* would be a good sailor, and the *Cape Sable*, being so small and old and dirty, had trouble getting anything but tramps. Jack's only

question before joining her had been about the chances of her putting into New York. The assurance that she never went there had been enough for him.

Then, within a few days, when the boatswain had wanted to take a photograph of the ship's crew, Jack had refused to join the group. Irritated, Oscar had snapped a picture of him in the forecabin, but Jack had taken the camera away from him and thrown the roll of films out a porthole into Baltimore harbor. He was the strongest man Oscar had ever encountered, and after that it had seemed certain that he was wanted by the New York police.

His manner, however, was not that of a gunman; Oscar remembered vividly Jack's expression one noon hour as he watched a red-headed tramp in the crew and a coal passer thumping each other with a worn set of boxing gloves. Jack had looked amusedly contemptuous, but when the tramp had taken offense, he had declined a chance to put on the gloves himself. The tramp had suggested sarcastically that Jack was Jack Carney, the world's heavyweight boxing champion, in disguise. The boatswain, overhearing, had been entertained and then irritated at the idea of a man under his orders even resembling the master of three million dollars. Jack Carney could have bought fifty *Cape Sables* and, anyway, he was known to be on a pleasure trip in Europe with his wife.

Oscar stood quietly at the rail, enjoying, with part of his mind, the mild December night. The *Cape Sable* would sail at daylight for Liverpool, her well decks sunk to within seven or eight feet of the water by a bulk cargo of wheat. It had been an odd fifty tons of general cargo for the after 'tween-deck that had brought her to Pratt Street for the last few hours.

She would have Christmas at sea. Oscar did not like that, and he did not like the looks of the temporary bulkheads in the holds to keep the cargo from shifting, nor the condition of much of the ship's gear; but he had grown to expect such things in the *Cape Sable*. Anyway, his time in her was almost up. After thirty years at sea he had brought himself up short, and in one year saved enough money to open a small tavern in Copenhagen. The mate had agreed reluctantly to pay him off in Liverpool, so this half trip would be his last.

From a ventilator near his feet, Oscar

became aware of a soft voice singing. The ventilator, he remembered, came from the room of two colored mess boys. Oscar listened with idle pleasure. The words ran very softly under slow, rapt humming, but they emerged at last through repetition.

"You bettah run,  
You bettah run,  
You bettah run  
To dat city of refuge.  
You bettah run——"

The boatswain grunted sardonically. He was not bound for any city of refuge. Then he was startled by the realization that Jack was. That the sea could represent peace and safety to any man went deeper than surprise. For himself, Oscar Skram, the sea represented all the turmoil and danger there was in life. His young days of drunkenness and rioting ashore were so far behind that there was no reality in them. If the sea had been a city of refuge then, it was no longer. Jack was to be pitied that he needed it.

**T**HE man on the quay moved on toward the *Cape Sable's* gangway. To Oscar's knowledge, Jack had not been ashore since he joined the ship. Probably this had been a dart after gear he had to have before sailing. Jack's overcoat looked like a good one, fitting him in a casual way unfamiliar to Oscar, but otherwise he had not dressed up.

A minute or two later Jack's light, poised steps sounded on the offshore ladder to the poop. Oscar remained quiet as the seaman passed along the opposite rail, hidden most of the time by booby hatches and the hand-steering gear. When Jack finally stopped, the steering gear was still between him and the boatswain. Oscar could see brokenly that Jack had rested both elbows on the rail and was staring down into the water. He looked as if he did not want company. When Jack had not moved for fully ten minutes, the boatswain began watching the shore again. Jailbird or no jailbird, he had liked Jack's looks from the first, and had been sorry that he could make no progress toward friendship.

Pratt Street was quieting down, traffic slowing and fewer people in sight. A woman came out of the shadow of the next pier shed and walked slowly along the head of the dock, looking at the moonlight on the water. She was young, by her figure and the way she moved, but she was not

being careful enough; there was no rail at all about the dock.

Oscar heard plainly the clank of the ring-bolt as her foot struck it, but after that his sensations could not catch up with events for some seconds.

The girl pitched clear of the masonry dockside, going into the water without chance of injury, but staying under a long time. Jack's overcoat landed half on the wheel box, half trailing on deck. Outside the rail his body showed hard and unfamiliarly slender against the shore lights. From the fifteen-foot dive he seemed to go under water hardly at all, but plowed on toward the end of the dock. Oscar had never seen such swimming; incredibly powerful, but without an ounce of energy wasted.

Oscar remembered the round life buoy on the *Cape Sable's* stern, but the distance was too great for a throw. The buoy and Jack's overcoat hampered him as he ran down to the well deck, but from there he could leap directly to the pier and run lumberingly to the spot where the girl had fallen.

Jack had her already in one arm, and was not in the slightest trouble, but he accepted the boatswain's life buoy, holding to it while Oscar towed them toward a vertical ladder in the dock side.

A small crowd gathered, talking and craning necks uselessly, but as Jack handed the girl up to Oscar at the head of the ladder, an automobile stopped short at the curb and a young man whose interest seemed more direct came running over.

From the way in which he asked questions, hurrying and supplementing answers for himself, Oscar thought he must be an important city official, but Jack would not speak or even look at him.

The girl was standing now, recovering quickly as Jack wrapped his overcoat about her. Her hair had come down over her shoulders, thick and very pale in the night light.

The young man turned suddenly and called to some one in the automobile.

"Come on, Meyers. Attempted suicide. You can get one of this for the morning edition."

A second young man left the car, bringing an elaborate-looking camera and flashlight materials. The crowd opened for him willingly. But Jack swung around to face the camera lens. His voice was even

uglier than Oscar had known it could be. "Put that thing away, fellow. This was an accident, not suicide. We don't need any pictures."

Meyers laughed. "No? Hold that a minute. It's good." The flash light exploded above his head as he finished speaking.

Jack caught his arm. "Take that plate out. Listen"—he spoke hurriedly as the man tried to wrench away—"I'll buy it from you. Any price."

"Go to hell," Meyers snarled. "I guess I've got more here than I thought I had, eh?"

Jack took the camera out of his hands and pitched it into the water well out from the dockside. Some one in the crowd giggled. It had looked as though Meyers' resistance had been playful. The man struck Jack in the jaw with his fist, as the spectators went back hastily. Jack held him off with one hand while he spoke to the girl.

"Get out of this. Never mind the coat. Keep it."

As she disappeared, he straightened his arm so that Meyers sat down among cobblestones and black mud. "I'll pay——" Jack was beginning when Oscar caught sight of Meyers' partner coming up on Jack's side, one hand behind him.

"Yack, vatch out!"

Jack understood the hidden hand and struck this time with his fist. The blow was the quickest Oscar had ever seen; the sound of its landing crisp and unpleasant. The man went down full length, out of things.

"I said I'd pay for that camera," Jack said to Meyers without anger.

Meyers' voice changed; petulant now and uneasy. "It's worth a hundred dollars. I'll call a cop. I'll——"

"Here's a hundred and fifty. Take it and keep still."

Oscar saw with his own eyes the passing of the bills, three crisp fifties; then a new voice, deep yet oddly penetrating, spoke from behind the men.

"Just what is this, now?"

Oscar knew a policeman had arrived without being called, even before he saw the blue arm go out to Jack's shoulder. Jack's face kept low, half hidden.

"It's all right, officer. Trouble's all straightened out."

"Wait a minute. Wait a minute." Big

brown fingers kept Jack from turning away. "The three of you'd better come with me until we're sure about that."

Oscar was watching Jack's eyes. He could not bear the sudden desperation in them. He never was able to remember exactly when he started to move, but he felt the shock of kicking the policeman's legs out from under him and heard his own explosive shout, "Yack, beat it!"

For himself, he knew enough to take the opposite direction from the one Jack was taking. The policeman must not have liked being tripped up, because he came charging after Oscar instead of Jack. The boatswain had a good start, but after a minute he was cut off by a pier watchman. There was nothing for it but to turn out of the pier itself. The warehouse was open, full of bundles and bales offering hiding places, but Oscar passed them all. He was surprised at how short his wind had grown; he had not run for years, but he knew that in other ways he was as strong as he had ever been.

**T**HE pier extended beyond its solid foundations onto open piling, and at the extreme end Oscar found a rickety wooden ladder leading down to the water. There was no boat there, in which to hide under the pier, but he climbed down anyway, swinging around behind the ladder and holding onto the side pieces so that his hands would not show.

When steps shuffled and pounded on the planks above him, he lowered his feet silently into the water, finding, as he had hoped, a last rung a foot below the surface. So he was hidden while a flash light played persistently on the ladder and along the black piles. When the light was withdrawn, Oscar lifted his half-numbed feet from the water, but he clung to the ladder for a long time. There were so many hiding places on the pier and in vessels moored alongside it that the hunt would probably not be over quickly.

To keep his mind off cramped muscles, he thought about Jack. He was certain now that Jack had not done anything low; if he was a jailbird, he had been framed, or in some kind of fight. Oscar knew that he would not have tripped up a policeman for an ordinary crook; the fact that he had tripped up this one instinctively seemed to him an omen. Ordinarily he respected the law profoundly; even in his

heart he had considered being arrested rather an honor. But to keep Jack from being arrested he would trip a policeman every day. The trouble on the quay had not been serious, but Jack could not afford to be seen around police stations. It was not stinginess with his money that kept him away from shore; he had paid out that hundred and fifty as if it was small change, and given away a good overcoat, too.

After a long silence Oscar crept back up his ladder. He continued with ponderous caution, but to his surprise he reached the shore, and farther on the *Cape Sable's* gangway, without seeing any one.

On board, when he looked into the fore-castle, he found Jack asleep in his bunk, the curtain half drawn. Even in sleep, Jack's face looked strained and unhappy. Oscar sat down on the short settee in his own room and pulled off his wet shoes. His feet were still cold, he was tired and ached all over. The idea of sailing at day-break was no longer so oppressive to him. For once the sea promised contrast of peacefulness.

**T**WO weeks later the *Cape Sable* was done for. She lay helpless in the trough of a driving gray sea as she had lain for three days, listing slowly to starboard as the grain in her holds slipped and crept and drifted over collapsed wooden bulkheads. Her starboard rail was already under water, making her deck and port side into a broken ridge, swept constantly by seas. The cargo had begun to shift when the storm picked up, nine days out of the Chesapeake Bay, but for a time the *Cape Sable* had fought back; her men shoveling and nailing doggedly below. On the eleventh day hull plates were sprung, water deepened in the fireroom, and she gave up. Now there seemed some question whether she would turn over or simply founder, but she would do one or the other within a few hours.

Her whole company, officers and men together, were gathered in the saloon house, sitting or lying flat on the floor, slack muscled and gray faced. Some wore oilskin coats and sea boots, others civilian slickers or overcoats; each kept a bulky white life belt within reach. There was little talk; after two days of desperate labor had come three without hot food or decent sleep. For twenty-four hours now there had been almost no food of any kind.

A rusty hinge on the weather door of the galley had broken, and sea water had tumbled tables and gear in a heap against the opposite bulkhead, spouting through the holes in the range itself. There was food in the lazaret below the saloon pantry, but the place was deeply awash, and the men wanted not food, but rest.

The lifeboats on their cracked blocks had gone the second day of the storm, the lee boat clear overboard, but the weather one, oddly, held down between its davits and a row of ventilator bases, one side stove in. Late the fourth day the wireless shack had been swept as if with a broom off the boat deck, but, after a warning lurch that allowed the operator time to get below.

So for twenty-four hours they had been cut off. Before that there had been replies to S O S calls, but only one that promised help. The west-bound passenger liner *Atlantis* had been within a hundred and fifty miles when the wireless carried away, fighting her way toward the *Cape Sable*, but twenty-four hours had passed, and she was not in sight. Darkness was very near, there were no lights left in serviceable condition on board the freighter, and there would not be any more mornings for her.

Oscar Skram and Jack Morgan sat side by side at the after end of the starboard passage in the saloon house, backs against one bulkhead, feet braced against the other. The *Cape Sable* was already beginning to take the kind of rolls from which Oscar knew she might never come back, but the sinister heaviness of her motion was a relief after the wrenching of past days.

Oscar sat hunched over, his head resting on his knees. He and Jack had shoveled wheat for twenty-four hours, then after four hours' sleep, for twenty hours more. At the end they had been nearly cut off and smothered when the bulkheads gave way. No one else on board had done as much. They were rather isolated at the end of the passage.

"Bose, you asleep?"

Oscar raised his head. "No, not me."

He saw that Jack was looking at him steadily, with eyes unwearied.

"Listen, bosc, I want to tell you something. You know that time I wouldn't let you take my picture, and what you did for me inside of a week? I've felt like hell about that. Listen, bosc, I am Jack Carney."

Oscar blinked dazedly while Jack hurried on. "I've got proof enough; a razor would prove it for one thing; but take my word, will you, bosc?"

Oscar smiled with gentleness at his anxiety. "Sure I tak' you' word, Yack. But if I was you, no *Cape Sable* nor *Eastern Trader*, neither, would see much of me."

"I want to tell you about it, bosc." Jack's voice was low but oddly distinct above the outside driving of seas and the loosening creak of panels in the passageway. "Maybe it'll be funny to you. You know, when I got inmarried, I surprised people a little. My wife was not the sort of girl you'd expect to marry a fighter. But I was satisfied, and I think she was, at first. It was the newspaper lads that made the trouble. Everything we did was photographed; no matter where we went; it was just as bad as in New York. I didn't mind so much; I'd gotten used to it since I won the title, and I didn't see how much Nancy hated it. I found out all at once.

"A camera man from some tabloid paper, bosc, climbed out on a coping outside her room in a hotel where we were staying, and I caught him there. I dropped his camera fourteen stories, and I reckon I'd have dropped him, too, if he hadn't sworn he thought it was my room and halfway proved it was so.

"But that didn't matter to Nancy. She couldn't stand any more of it. I don't say I blame her, either. In the end I got her to promise that if no pictures were made of me for six months, she would come back and try again. That was the best I could do. She sailed for Europe the next day.

"First I went to a place I have in the Adirondacks. It was private enough there, but I was alone, and I missed Nancy so I couldn't stand it. Did you ever miss any one like that, bosc?"

Oscar smiled slowly. "I never had nobody, Yack, so I never missed nobody."

Jack hesitated, but went on with vehemence. "I couldn't stand it. I thought about the sea. I learned to fight in the navy, you know, and it seemed as if getting back to sea—the work and change might help me to stick it out. As soon as these whiskers made a showing, I shipped in the *Eastern Trader*, thinking she'd make a six months' trip. But she was back early, and I came aboard here to fill out the time. The six months is up at six o'clock this evening, bosc—Christmas Eve. I was



going to quit on the other side and find Nancy. She's been in Antwerp. That's why I was so nasty, do you see?"

Oscar nodded. "I never hold it against you, Yack. I t'ink you had trouble wit' de police, but I don't t'ink you do anyt'ing very bad, or I don't help you out dat time." After a minute he said, "It iss awful bad luck you hat to come in such a tub as dis vun. Vy you don't tak' an-odder lak de *Eastern Trader*?"

"Oh, this one was handy, and I didn't want to be seen on shore. I wasn't crazy about being safe, anyhow, when Nancy can get along without me so easy. But you, bosc, you're the best seaman I was ever shipmates with. You could take your pick of the best jobs. What are you doing here?"

Oscar blinked thoughtfully. "I don't know. I been in dis ship years. She run cheap; carry grain cheap, maybe help to mak' bret cheap somevare dey need it cheap. I don't know. But maybe dat *Atlantis* she show up yet."

"I don't figure on it," Jack said quietly. "She's had nothing to guide her for a good while now. And she may have given us up when our signals stopped."

But because Oscar saw that Jack was fighting down a terrible sort of hope, he would not let him go on thinking.

"Vell, you didn't get no picture took, anyway. Say, dat vas a good one you gave dat faller on Pratt Street."

"I didn't like him," Jack grunted. "Attempted suicide! He'd put that in the paper with the girl's picture. People who knew her'd see it and think there was something wrong with her."

"Dat's right, and say, you can swim some, too."

"I used to do a lot before I went in the ring. Seems a long time ago now."

**I**N a short silence, Oscar saw one of the men watching them curiously from a few yards away. It was the red-headed tramp who owned the boxing gloves; luster gone from his hair now, and skin white over the bones of his face. Oscar remembered that he had worked as hard as the rest, in addition to being sea-sick ever since the *Cape Sable* left the Chesapeake.

On impulse, he lifted one hand and beckoned. The man crawled toward them.

"Aye, 'Red,'" Oscar murmured, "you

know dat time you vas going to make Yack box? He iss Yack Carney, you know."

Red was quite still a moment, on hands and knees, his head lifted. Then he grinned with radiance. "I kin see it. I kin see it, spinach or no spinach." His voice dropped to slow regret. "Why didn't yuh sock me that day, champ? It would 'a' been something to have happen. Listen, champ, will yuh sock me now?"

Jack stared, then reached out and pushed Red's jaw sharply with his right fist. "Laugh that one off."

Red shook his head admiringly. "Thanks, champ."

The bulkhead at their backs trembled under a bigger sea, and the floor began to rise slowly. As it kept on rising, Oscar braced against it, muscles all through his body drawing cold and sick. When the back roll began after a moment's utter balance, the three men stared at each other with open, surprised eyes.

Jack pulled himself to his feet by the handrail. "I'm going out somewhere."

Oscar and Red followed silently. Outside the saloon door the fiddle and galley bulkheads made a lee, but the wind was very loud in the funnel stays, and water poured down everywhere. The air was salt and wet, clinging to a man's face. The *Cape Sable* rolled slowly and heavily, late in answering the sea's motion as though she obeyed only long, tired habit. The gray-streaked backs of the seas that rose under her lee were as big as any Oscar had seen. They were darker gray already, pulling the horizon in delicately on all sides. Neither the seas nor the air was bitterly cold; if they had been, Oscar thought, a man could not live long.

Jack was staring at the ladder to the boat deck. "I'm going up there," he said. "I want the wind in my face."

Oscar knew that he was going wherever Jack went, and Red seemed to feel the same way. Traveling was hard, half under water, holding grimly, but on the boat deck they found they could keep their feet all the time in the lee of the wrecked port boat. It was still wedged stubbornly between its davits and the ventilator bases.

From there almost at once they saw the range lights of the *Atlantis* lift from the flashing of wave crests; steady burning, unmistakable. As she headed, the liner would have run the *Cape Sable* squarely down, but already her blinker was working.

The chief mate of the freighter answered with a flash light from the pilot-house window, since the port rail of the bridge had been carried away.

"Says she'll let a boat drift down to us, and how long can we last," Jack explained slowly. "Mate says hurry."

"You tak' blinker, eh, Yack?"

"Yes. I learned in the navy."

It was evident now that the *Cape Sable* would turn over before she foundered. Her port side rose, flat and rusty, through broken water, until the bilge keel showed. The slant of the boat deck had grown so steep that the men there crouched, hanging onto the lowered gunwale of the lifeboat.

The *Atlantis* stopped about a quarter of a mile dead to windward, rounding to in the trough of the sea, showing a high, shadowy side broken by rows and splotches of lighted portholes.

Oscar saw the flash of her line-throwing gun three times; twice the projectile fell short, and once passed clear over the *Cape Sable*, trailing a length of broken line after it. From the bridge the mate's flash light begged for haste. The freighter's masts leaned far out over the water now, and once, when Red lost his hold, only the coaming of the engine-room skylight saved him from sliding clear across the boat deck and overboard.

But a boat was crawling down the lee side of the *Atlantis*. There was still enough light to see that only two men were in it. So they would not try to cast off and row. Oscar did not blame them for that. The boat would drift down to the *Cape Sable* before the wind and sea, while a stout line from the *Atlantis* held its bow to the sea, and poured crude oil weighted crests. Once in the trough of waves like these, a lifeboat would be finished. In the sea the boat was nothing; brief dead white under gray walls, but because of the line and storm oil, she lived and drifted closer.

The long, canted side of the *Cape Sable* kept the boat from coming close to the rail. The play of the long line, too, made her stay away. The plunging bilge keel, touching the boat, would have opened it like a herring. Repeated casts with a heavy line from the *Cape Sable's* bridge fell short. Her own Lyle gun had gone overboard with the wireless shack. She hardly rolled, now, was settling, rather, on her side.

Jack Carney hauled himself suddenly

over the gunwale of the broken lifeboat and cleared a coil of light line from under a thwart. He looped a bowline diagonally across his body and passed the coil to the boatswain.

"Tend this for me, bosc. I'll signal if I make it."

**I**N the backwash of another sea, he went off the boat deck, running quickly down the ship's side like a child on a sloping beach, and diving from the upflung bilge keel. Oscar's fingers crushed themselves against the boat gunwale as the next wave smashed down on the steel plates, but Jack had not been caught by it. The water was foul with storm oil from the *Atlantis*.

For a while, because of spray and gray light, the boatswain saw nothing of him, only the line kept a feel of life. Then, unbelievable, a flash light was working from the lifeboat. Because Oscar could not read blinker, he stood fast until the chief mate and others took the line from him and worked it swiftly aft, to the poop, where, on the weather side, because of the increasing list, a man would not be swept away. At the same time, conforming to Jack's signals, the *Atlantis* had gone slow astern until the lifeboat lay safe at the end of her towing line, scarcely a hundred feet from the *Cape Sable's* reeling taffrail.

With the line Jack had carried to the boat from the freighter, a life buoy was hauled earnestly back and forth until the entire crew was off. While the last man was being pulled over the lifeboat's gunwale, the *Cape Sable's* masts touched the water and she sank. The waves were black, in a moment's odd illusion, where she had floated.

Oscar grieved, but not bitterly. She was like a human being who had lingered too long.

The towing line of the *Atlantis'* lifeboat held stoutly, and soon under the shelter of the liner's side, with pilot ladders and cargo nets let down, boarding her needed only care and the little strength that was left in each man.

Oscar stayed persistently at Jack Carney's side. Jack's shoulder had been bruised against the gunwale of the *Atlantis'* boat, but otherwise he seemed in the best condition of all the *Cape Sable's* men.

Because the *Atlantis*, too, was having

Christmas at sea, she was almost empty of passengers, and the rescued men received the attention of an endless steward's department. The boatswain and Jack shared a clean, bare third-class room on a lower deck. Within fifteen minutes they were scrubbed clear of storm oil and had turned into the berths, Jack above, Oscar below, both in new pajamas. Oscar pulled the unfamiliar white sheet up about his neck and stretched his legs inquiringly. The pajamas were the first he had ever had on in his life.

Before sleep quite began, a steward rapped on the door and looked in.

"Excuse me. Is the man who swam out to the boat with the line in this room?"

"Aye," said Oscar impulsively, "in de upper bunk."

The steward's eyes lifted. "There is a lady, sir, who wishes to take a photograph of you. She is very insistent."

Oscar heard springs creak as Jack sat up. "What time is it, steward?"

"About seven o'clock, sir."

"All right. My time's up. Where is she?"

"She's here, sir, if you don't mind."

From the shadows of the lower bunk, Oscar knew the steward disappeared after the lady had entered, but it had not been because he was paying attention to stewards.

Oscar thought dazedly that the lady was about sixteen, although, reasonably, she must be older. She wore a bright evening dress, with smooth bodice and fluffy skirt above stockings and slippers pale as fading light. Folds of heavy silk and long fringes were not intended quite to hide soft white shoulders. Oscar's eyes moved reverently to her face. Her hair was light brown, low about slowly coloring cheeks. He had never seen gentleness like this before. Her eyes were wide-set, gray, beginning instead of fading light.

Jack Carney slid down from the upper berth and stood before her, in the first awkward position Oscar had ever seen him

take. Profound things were happening to the lady's eyes, but she did not speak.

After a while Jack said with dazed, curiously dignified apology. "I hope you'll excuse me. I had some brandy without eating anything." He raised one hand slowly. "Nancy?"

Her voice was sweet almost beyond speaking. "Yes, dear?"

Oscar pretended for a while to be asleep, but he could not help hearing words that went slow and fast, near breaking.

"There haven't been any pictures, Nancy."

"But it didn't matter, darling. Oh, it didn't matter. I've known it didn't matter—not compared to having you—ever since the first day I didn't have you. I went back to New York on the first ship, and you were gone. I couldn't find you. I've been trying to find you ever since. Then I saw you coming up the side. Your beard wasn't any protection."

When, after silence, Oscar opened his eyes, the room was empty. He lay quiet, staring at the bottom of the upper berth, feeling warm inside and happy. He thought he felt that way because of what had happened to Jack; the opening of his own Copenhagen tavern would be delayed a month at least, so it must be because of Jack, or possibly the brandy the steward had given him when he came on board.

But he was not sleepy any more. He rolled out of the berth, put on a bath robe that had been given him with the pajamas, and found his way along a passage to a broad, deserted deck, sheltered from the wind.

Waves still raced white crested alongside, but the *Atlantis* drove on steadily, imperviously. Staring at the sea, Oscar felt the beginning of vindictive triumph. "Yahhh," he snarled aloud, "dat time ve beat——"

He stopped short, anger strangely gone. "No. I don't mean dat. I don't mean dat at all. If you had really wanted us, you would have had us now."





# High Islands\*

By CLIFFORD GESSLER

\*Mariners in the Pacific distinguish between "high" or volcanic and "low" or coral islands.

HEARING all night the muttering of the engines  
and the ship's bells all night every half hour,  
the lowing all night of the cattle lashed to the rails forward  
and the hula music spiraling out of the steerage—  
Rise in the early glow and stand facing forward  
on the narrow deck among the tubs of *poi*,  
the pails of *shoyu*, the odorous jars of *daikon*,  
looking out over the steaming backs of cattle  
sluiced down all night with water by the deck hands,  
to the high islands lifting like dreams from the amethyst sea.

Maui is red, Lanai is red-brown,  
Molokai a purple shadow; Kahoolawe  
a tawny plume on the wind toward Kahiki;  
Kauai is green and rose; Hawaii  
floats cloud-white with snow above the sea-edging green;  
Oahu is green and gold, a cloud land floating on the horizon.

These all are fire-born lands,  
lands of an ancient magic—  
dark with old sorrows, and bright rainbow lands.  
Oh, Islands of Hawaii  
and all high islands, fragrant  
deep-blossoming flowers of the sea,  
I salute you!

# Early Days



Shipping out of Liverpool in the

**I** DEVELOPED a craving to go to sea when I was about twelve years old. One of my school-mates, who was several years older than I, left school and went to sea. After having been away about a year he returned home and paid a visit to his old school in all the glory of uniform, badge, cap, brass buttons, and tanned skin. I looked on him as nothing short of a hero and decided then and there that I was going to be a sailor.

Several shrewd hints on the subject did not arouse any interest or enthusiasm in my parents. No one in our family had ever been a sailor, except an uncle by marriage, and he was looked upon as a ne'er-do-well because he ran away from home as a boy to join a ship.

At the age of fourteen, having reached the highest class in my school, and the family exchequer not being sufficiently solvent to afford any further education, I had to look around for a job. Eventually I got a position as office boy with a marine insurance firm in Liverpool. It was not at all to my liking, but at any rate it got me downtown among the shipping offices and folks who knew something about ships.

In this office I first saw a ship's log-book, and in it I read the account of a bark being dismasted off the Horn. The owners had sent it in in furtherance of their claim for new masts, rigging, and a new suit of sails. To them the document meant only a monetary transaction, but to me it represented a wonderful romance of the sea.

I spent many hours, I am afraid, poring

# By Commander Bisset, R. N. R.



days before the "Overhead" was built.

over those old log books when I should have been working. In them I read many wonderful stories of shipwrecks, strandings, ships on their beam ends, collisions with icebergs and other vessels—of fires at sea and in port, of leaky ships and damaged cargoes, dismastings, and mutinies.

After about three weeks in this office, during which time my head became as stuffed with sea lore as any old shellback's, I looked around for a job in a shipowner's office. After a few weeks of searching through the want ads of the *Liverpool Daily Post* I got a berth with the Anglo American Oil Co.

This position entailed an interview with Mr. Lloyd, the office manager, a sandy-haired Welshman with a bristling red mustache and an atrocious Welsh accent. As I

entered his office he looked me over intently and said, "Haff you effer peen in an office before?"

"Yes, sir," I replied. "I have been three weeks with the General Marine Insurance Co."

"Oh, indeed," said he. "And whateffer did you leave them for?"

"Well," said I with courage born of a great determination, "I want to go to sea, and I thought if I could get a job with a firm owning some ships I might stand a better chance of getting away with some success."

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Lloyd, taking another good look at my puny four feet three inches of skin and bone. "You will neffer make a sailor, indeed to goodness no! You are too small. Whateffer



does your mother and father think about it?"

"Well," said I ingeniously, "they don't mind my going to sea, provided I can find a good ship in a good firm that will take me."

"Oh, oh!" said Mr. Lloyd. "I cannot believe it. You had much better stay here in the office. The sea is a ferry hard life indeed. The captains of some of our ships are in the office, I will get them to talk to you. They will frighten you to death with their terrible stories of hardships and perils. I will give you the job in the office, but you must settle down and be a good boy and forget all about ships. Run along now and see Mr. Prown, the bookkeeper, he will show you your duties."

The next morning found me again at a desk, but the sea fever was still strong within me.

**S**EVERAL days later, when I had got to know most of the clerks, I was called into the cash office and introduced to three captains by the cashier. They were big bronzed fellows in heavy greatcoats, colored scarfs and bowler hats. They were busy counting out quantities of golden sovereigns—their pay, I suppose—and stowing them away in their capacious pockets.

As the last coins clinked home they looked at me, as I thought, with some astonishment, but in a friendly way. "Well, young fellow my lad," said one of them, "so you want to go to sea, eh?" "Lay over here and let's have a look at th' cut o' your jib," said another.

I advanced into the office and the third one grasped my shoulder with a hand about the size of a shovel and turned me toward the light and said, "How d'you think he'd look, boys, on a main-topsail yard in a livin' gale, goose-wingin' the main-lower topsail?"

"Aye," chipped in another. "An' it cold enough to freeze th' toes off a brass monkey, too."

"Yes," added the third with a deep-chested chuckle, "an' the old ship wallowin' around an' rollin' her guts out. An' thunder an' lightnin'—an' snowin'. An' you wet through and far from home—an' th' galley fire out. Oh, ho, my boy, it's a hell of a life. Take my tip an' stop ashore. Only fools go to sea!"

With that they all gave me a hearty slap

on the back and rolled out of the office. I followed them to the street door and watched with envious eyes as they walked away, laughing and cavorting like three schoolboys. They turned into the local public house for their morning beer. They had tried to frighten me, but their words somehow or other did not seem to ring true.

They appeared to me like men who would revel in the hardships they had spoken of and it struck me then, and has done so on many occasions since, that a man who would not revel in such things is not worth his salt at sea. Anyhow they did not shake my determination to go to sea one little bit.

About this time I commenced visiting various shipping offices in my dinner hour and asking if they wanted any apprentices in their ships. Usually I was handed a printed form to fill in, asking all sorts of questions such as my age, where born, education, health, eyesight, and so forth. At some places they said, "No, we don't carry apprentices." Or, "No vacancies." At another office a perky office boy, with his mouth full, threw back the inquiry window and said, "Whajerwant?" He was evidently annoyed at being disturbed in the middle of his lunch.

In answer to my inquiry regarding apprentices he favored me with a look of blank amazement and said, "'Ere, who're you gettin' at? 'Op it! Whajer think this is, a labor exchange?" Having completed these remarks, he slammed the window in my face.

Guessing the office to be empty, I picked up a waste-paper basket and threw it over the partition in the general direction of the enemy. Then I beat a hasty retreat.

Whenever I obtained a form to fill in I would take it home in the evening. I would read out all the questions, slowly and deliberately, to my parents, asking them for the best answers. I hoped by this method to arouse a small spark of enthusiasm in them. It was uphill work, and for several months I went on filling in forms. But I could not get my parents to sign them, so they were of no avail.

I threatened to run away to sea, and several times I stayed out very late at night, hoping when I got home to find them anxiously wondering whether I had achieved my object. But as far as I could see the only anxiety they displayed was for me to come in so that they could lock the

door and go to bed. As a result I would also go to bed—supperless.

It is said that constant dripping wears away the hardest stone, and so by dint of constantly worrying and talking about the sea I wore down their patience till they began to think that if I got away to sea they might get a little rest. I was quick to notice this change of front, slight though it was. So I redoubled my efforts, and eventually father got in touch with a Mr. McPherson, a friend of his in the White Star freight department. This gentleman promised to make some inquiries about getting me in a ship.

At his suggestion I got a medical certificate from our family doctor and an eyesight certificate from the Board of Trade. The family doctor told my parents that he thought it was the best thing I could do and pronounced me fit. That advice washed out all their objections, and at last they decided to help me. I went in to see Mr. McPherson and told him all the good news and he advised me to be patient and that he would do all he could.

Three weeks went by, and then there came a letter asking my father and me to go down on Monday noon to see Mr. McPherson at his office. He said that a firm of sailing-ship owners, known as William Thomas & Sons, of Liverpool, were in need of an apprentice for a ship sailing to Australia in a few weeks. He also said that if my father and I agreed we could go along together and fix things up with Mr. Thomas. We accordingly went, myself well in the lead and treading on air.

Mr. Thomas was a tall old gentleman, with white hair and whiskers. He was dressed in a black frock coat. We were introduced by Mr. McPherson, and then Mr. Thomas asked me a few questions and examined my medical certificates. He then explained to my father the terms of my apprenticeship, which were that he should put down a premium of twenty pounds as a surety that I would complete my four-year indentures. It was also agreed that the owners would use all proper means to teach me the business of a seaman and to provide me with sufficient meat, drink, lodging, medical and surgical assistance, and medicine.

In return I was to faithfully serve the master and owners, obey their lawful commands and keep their secrets. I was to give

them true accounts of any goods or money committed to my charge, prevent damages to their goods or property by others. In addition I was to refrain from embezzlement waste, or loan of their property without permission; I was not to absent myself from their service without leave, nor to frequent taverns and alehouses, nor play unlawful games. For wages it was agreed to pay me three pounds for the first year, four pounds for the second year, five pounds for the third year, and eight pounds for the fourth and last year. After having completed my apprenticeship the premium would be returned to my father.

Having agreed to all this, Mr. Thomas told me to come back in a week's time, and he would then have the indentures ready for signing. After that I would be a legally-bound apprentice and would commence my duties a day later in the three-masted bark *County of Pembroke*, which was expected to sail for Australia shortly.

My excitement broke all bounds, and racing back to the office, I went in to see Mr. Lloyd, telling him the wonderful news and that I would soon be leaving his employ.

"Well, well," he exclaimed. "You do indeed surprise me. How did it come to happen so suddenly?"

Then I had to tell him the whole story. When I had finished he was almost as excited as I was, and told me to see him the next day. The other boys in the office clustered around to hear the news when five o'clock came. Nothing would do then but that we all go down to the Sulthouse Dock to see my ship. But, alas, a big policeman stopped us at the gate and refused us admittance. We turned away rather disappointed but I had the secret satisfaction of knowing that in a week's time the arm of the law could no longer deny me entrance.

**N**EXT day Mr. Lloyd sent for me and said that the management had decided to pay me my week's pay and let me go on the Wednesday, three days earlier than I was entitled to leave. This was great news, and I began to feel that the whole world was helping me.

My mother had already begun to think about my outfit, and she was very busy getting all sorts of underwear and warm clothing together. It began to look as though I was going on an arctic expedi-

tion. Our various relatives soon got the news and came around to look at me as if I was some sort of a curiosity. I believe in the back of their minds they had an idea that going to sea was hardly a respectable occupation!

At last Monday came and my father and I set out for the office to sign the indentures. We were ushered into a small board room containing an oblong leather-topped table surrounded by eight high-backed chairs. The table carried eight old-fashioned inkwells with quill pens to match, also eight green blotters. On a high shelf around the walls stood a number of large shiny tin boxes, each marked with the name of a ship and evidently containing records. Among them I could see one marked "*Bark County of Pembroke*," and in fancy I could see my indentures going into it in the very near future.

After waiting about twenty minutes Mr. Thomas entered, accompanied by his manager, and shaking hands with my father and ignoring me, he bade us all be seated. He then instructed the manager to read over the indentures. Having first polished a pair of rusty steel-rimmed spectacles with a rather doubtful-looking silk handkerchief, and adjusting them on the end of his suspiciously-red nose, the manager read in a monotone:

"This indenture, made the seventh day of October, 1898, between James Gordon Bisset, aged fourteen and one half years, a native of Liverpool, in the County of Lancaster, and now residing at Cambridge Street, Liverpool, of the first part. William Thomas and Company, of No. 14 Water Street, Liverpool, of the second part, and James Smith Bisset—my father—of No. 4 Cambridge Street, Liverpool, of the third part. Witnesseth, that the said James Gordon Bisset hereby voluntarily binds himself apprentice unto the said William Thomas and Company, his executors, administrators, and assigns for a term of four years from the date hereof, and so forth and so forth."

About this stage of the proceedings I fell to dreaming. Indentures meant nothing to me, and I considered them a sheer waste of time. I was prepared to go to sea whatever the conditions. Then I heard Mr. Thomas' voice interrupting the solemn reading.

"Mr. Jones," he said, "repeat the sentence beginning with 'provide.'"

Mr. Jones cleared his throat and commenced, "Provide the apprentice with sufficient meat, drink, lodging, washing, and all——"

"Ah," said Mr. Thomas. "That word 'washing' must be crossed out. In a sailing ship every one does their own washing, so of course there is no need for it."

My father nodded his assent and Mr. Jones shakily put his pen through the offending word and went on with his reading. The last words were, "Signed, sealed, and delivered, in the presence of——"

Then Mr. Thomas signed, followed by me, and finally my father as surety. We also each initialed the word "washing" which had been crossed out. Then three little red seals were stuck on, one opposite each signature.

Mr. Thomas, addressing me, said: "You are now a member of our company, and I hope that you will be a good boy and that the captain will give us good reports of you at the end of the voyage."

My father, having made out a check for twenty pounds for my premium, handed it over and said he would like, if possible, to meet the captain. Mr. Thomas then ordered a clerk to accompany us down to the ship for the purpose of introducing us to Captain Williams. Mr. Thomas then shook hands and wished me a pleasant voyage and departed.

After about a twenty minutes' walk along the Dock Road, we came to the Salthouse Dock. As we walked around the end of the shed we came in full view of my ship in all her glory of tapering spars and maze of rigging. What a glorious sight! I found it difficult to believe that at last my ambitions were realized, and that this wonderful craft was to be my home for the next four years.

Climbing a small ladder up the side, we jumped down on deck from the rail and gazed about us in astonishment at the apparently extremely complicated network of ropes, wires, spars, blocks, and rigging which stretched above and about us. The clerk disappeared aft toward the cabin, and in the meanwhile a lanky youth with merry blue eyes and a peaked cap came up and asked our business. We stated it and he introduced himself to us as Mr. Musgrave, the second mate.

My father expressed a hope that Mr. Musgrave would keep an eye on me during the voyage and see that I came to no

harm. He told the second mate that I was such a weak, puny mortal that I probably could not stand the strain and rigors of such a life.

"Oh, don't you worry about that," said the second mate. "He'll be as right as rain. Why, when I first went to sea, about five years ago, I was as small as he is, and look at me! Six feet high and as hard as nails. You won't recognize him when he gets back!"

At this point the clerk appeared and beckoned us to come along. Mounting a short ladder leading to the poop, we walked aft a few yards and down a half-winding companionway, through a door, and into the saloon. This was a compartment about twenty feet long by twelve feet wide, stretching right into the stern of the vessel. Seated at an oblong table in the center was Captain Williams, who rose as we entered and shook hands warmly, bidding us be seated.

He was a thickset, good-looking little man with jet-black hair and twinkling brown eyes and a kindly smile. He hastened to reassure my father on all doubtful points, and in a few minutes they were laughing together over a peg of whisky. My eyes took in every detail of that spotless room. It was lined with highly-polished panels of bird's-eye maple. There was a swing tray over the table with a wonderful assortment of fancy-colored glasses hanging upside down in slots around the edge of it. There was an oak medicine chest, a sideboard with highly polished brass rails around its marble top, and a comfortable-looking red-plush settee running across the after part of the room. Last but not least, I noticed the narrow-planked deck, white as a hound's tooth, gleaming in the sun.

I little thought that in the near future I would be down on my knees once a week holystoning that deck, and about once a month polishing that bird's-eye maple.

When we got up to leave it did not occur to me that I had sat at the captain's table for the first and last time on board that vessel. My instructions were to be on board at seven o'clock the next morning, ready for work. On the way ashore we again met the second mate and he gave us some advice about my outfit. The burden of this was, "Let him have plenty of old working clothes with lots of room in them, for he'll grow like a mushroom."

**T**HAT afternoon my mother and I went down to Lewis', the big department store, and got my outfit. The chief items were a wooden sea chest, a canvas sea bag, suit of oilskins, leather sea boots, three suits of dungarees, a leather belt with sheath and knife, and, greatest glory of all, a uniform cap with a shiny peak and William Thomas & Co.'s badge in the front of it.

The clerk tried to sell us a cracker-hash bag and mallet, ditty bag containing sail needles, marlinespikes, palms, serving boards, sail hooks and so forth. But we did not know what all those things were for, so we wisely deferred purchasing until I could find out. This I did a few days later, and the result was no purchase.

I commenced wearing the badge cap right away, and tucking a suit of dungarees under my arm for use on the morrow, walked out of the store with a slightly rolling gait. I imagined myself to be a real sailor already. The rest of the junk was sent up to the house, where for the next few days it remained on display to the constant amusement and interest of numerous friends and relatives who came to bid me bon voyage. I was the hero of the hour and as proud as a dog with two tails.

Next morning the family and myself were all up much earlier than we had ever been before. The reason for this was that I had to have breakfast and be out of the house by six o'clock. I was too excited to eat much, but mother wisely packed what was left over into a paper parcel and insisted on my taking it with me as a precaution against the hunger she knew was sure to come.

There were no electric trains or taxicabs in those days, but I started out on foot promptly at six. I was walking the entire distance to the docks, the whole family bidding me farewell at the front door as though I were going away for years. It was a cold dark morning in October, and the streets in our neighborhood looked strangely deserted and unfamiliar at that early hour.

As I got down toward the Dock Road, however, I gradually merged with a stream of laborers of all sorts and conditions. They were all trudging along to work at the various docks and I felt a little better at their company. I arrived on board fully fifteen minutes too early, and there was no one about except an old

watchman who was preparing to go off duty at seven o'clock.

A few minutes later the second mate appeared over the rail, and, seeing me, he took me along to the forward deck house. Throwing open a door, he said, "There's the half deck—your quarters. Make yourself at home, the other boys will be down soon."

The half deck was an oblong room across the house with a door each side onto the deck. It measured about fourteen feet by eight feet and contained six bunks in pairs, two athwartships and four fore and aft. There was also a small flap table screwed to the after bulkhead, six shelves for holding food and utensils, and a small water tank. Overhead a little skylight let in a glimmer of daylight, showing the place to be very dirty. It also smelled strongly of ropes, paint, and tar.

It was evident that while in port the half deck was used as a sort of temporary boatswain's store.

While I was taking stock of these things and feeling a bit nervous and miserable the other two apprentices arrived, talking and swearing roundly. Seeing me, they commenced a bombardment of questions, and in a few minutes the history of myself and my family was laid bare. They were big lads, the eldest one, Bill, having been to sea for three years. The younger one, Tommy, had been to sea for two years. Bill was a hard case, good looking, and had curly black hair. He was strong as a horse and ready to fight anybody at any time for anything. Tommy was a big lad, too, but wall-eyed, blond, and with a gentle, kindly nature.

They began hurriedly getting into very dirty dungarees and cursing their luck at having to work by the ship in port. They were in the middle of consigning the ship, the owners, the captain, and the mates to perdition when the second mate popped his head in suddenly and bawled out, "Turn to."

Out we all scurried on deck to commence work. The ship was loading with general cargo for Melbourne, and taking in stores for a twelve months' voyage. This latter was our job and I spent my first day from seven in the morning until noon and from one in the afternoon until six in the evening muling all sorts of commodities up a narrow gangplank to our rail and then down another plank to the deck. There

were barrels of flour, peas, salt beef, beans, sugar, pork, oatmeal, molasses, tar, kerosene, boiled and raw oil, turpentine and so forth. Other stores were drums of paint, coils of rope, balls of spun yarn and marline, bolts of canvas, sails, hanks of twine, boxes of all kinds of canned goods, and sacks of ship biscuits which were known as Liverpool pantiles.

Never having done a hand's turn before in the way of work, I was a little awkward at first, and I probably expended a maximum of effort for a minimum of achievement. There is a knack in all sorts of manual labor, even in rolling a barrel of pork or a coil of rope up and down a plank, but once it is learned considerably less effort is required.

The second mate, Bill, and Tommy good-naturedly kicked, pushed, swore and grumbled at me, and being excessively anxious to learn, I soon began to get quite handy at it.

By noon, when we knocked off for dinner, I was almost played out, and I retired in a famished condition to the half deck. There I soon made short work of my packet of sandwiches. Bill and Tommy, having eaten, decided to go ashore for some beer. But before doing so they asked me if I had any money. Innocently enough I said, "Yes, I have tuppence for a cup of coffee with my lunch."

"Hell," said Bill, "you can't get any coffee here. Hand over the money and we'll go and splice the main brace. That is, drink to the good health of the new apprentice. It's a old custom for every new chum to stand his footing that way."

Being of Scots extraction, I didn't think much of the old custom. But I reluctantly handed over my two pennies with a certain feeling of satisfaction that it had not been sixpence. Away they went, bidding me look out for their belongings in the meanwhile. They returned again on the stroke of one, smelling strongly of beer. Producing a bottle of beer from his pocket, Bill quickly knocked the neck of it off and poured it out into three enamel cups or pannikins. He insisted on my joining them at splicing the main brace.

It was my first baptism of beer, and I thought it pretty filthy stuff. However, I have since altered my opinion on that score! At this juncture the second mate bawled out "Turn to" and we went back to work.

**T**HE afternoon was spent in stowing away the stores we had taken on board in the morning. We had to make sure they would not receive damage from rain if it should come during the night with the stores exposed to it. The foodstuffs all went down the lazaret, which is a storeroom right aft in the run of the ship below the cabin.

The boatswain's stores all went forward in the forepeak. It was grueling work, with no let-up, and at knock-off time—six o'clock—I was fagged out, filthy dirty, and hungry as a hunter. But I was happy, I felt that hard work was going to do me good. On arrival at home the family greeted me like a long-lost son. But they were a little shocked at my dirty appearance and insisted on my having a bath before sitting down to the evening meal and retailing my experiences.

They plied me with questions and hung on every word I said till I began to feel like some noted explorer who has returned from miraculous experiences in darkest Africa.

I went to bed early that night and needed no rocking. The next day we lime-washed the insides of the big air-tight tanks, ready for stowing away the ship's biscuits. There were three of these tanks, each holding one ton of biscuits and fitted with air-tight lids. The lids were so small that only a boy could get into the tanks, so I got the job while Bill and Tommy passed me down the buckets of whitewash and superintended the job from the outside.

I had never had the opportunity before in my life of making free with a bucket of whitewash and a large flat brush. So you can imagine how I reveled in this chance. I certainly made a good job of those tanks, and my clothes, too.

A few days later, when the tanks were perfectly dry, we filled them full of biscuits and sealed the lids with putty. At sea one would be opened every few days and a supply taken out, after which they would be sealed up again. These precautions are to prevent weevils from getting into the bread, but they are not always successful. A biscuit singly is called a "biscuit," but in the mass they are known as "bread."

One day shortly before we sailed my mother, accompanied by her sister and my two brothers, came down to see the ship. I proudly showed them around, and finally

brought them into our living room—the half deck. By this time it had been holy-stoned and washed out, and we thought it looked fairly clean. But there were numerous cockroaches crawling about on the bulkheads—they were what is known as the "Rangoon variety"—and my mother expressed the opinion that some steps should be taken to get rid of them.

The carpenter, a dark, morbid-looking Welshman with a black overhanging mustache, heard this and assured my mother that if one cockroach was killed two would spring up in its place. After making this assertion he invited us to come next door and see his carpenter shop. Having got my mother and aunt inside, he suddenly lifted a long cross-cut saw from the wooden cleats on the bulkhead to which it was secured. There where the saw had been, and in its exact pattern, was a squirming mass of cockroaches!

With shrill exclamations of disgust my mother and aunt got out on deck and overside onto the dock wall. Nothing would induce them to come on board again. They expressed themselves as amazed that I, who had been brought up in a clean, spotless home, could ever bring myself to desire to live in such surroundings and conditions.

At last the ship was loaded and ready for sea, with stores on board and sails bent. We were warned to have our dunnage on board by midnight, as we were to sail at high water the following morning at six a. m.—October 15th, 1898. That day we worked all morning and were given the afternoon off to get our kits down.

My sea chest and bag were loaded onto the top of an old horse cab and I headed for the docks. I stopped en route to get my straw bed—known among sailors as a "donkey's breakfast." Hurriedly dumping my gear into the half deck, the old watchman on duty locked the door and I hastened to spend my last evening at home.

It was about eight thirty p. m. when my young brother and sister said good-by to me before they went to bed. It was then that I began to feel any qualms at leaving home. Later on my mother prepared a tasty supper of fried ham and eggs, but I was in such a hurry to get down to the ship that I could hardly eat anything.

Finally, about eleven p. m., after a tearful good-by to my mother, and lots of good advice about clothes and so forth, my



father, elder brother, and I set off on foot for the ship. As we approached the docks we encountered the backwash from the numerous public houses of that district which threw out their patrons and locked their doors at eleven p. m. Fights and scuffles appeared at every corner between the drunks and deadbeats, and we were at some pains to avoid them.

These scenes called forth further good advice from my father on the evils of strong drink. I began to think that if good advice went for anything at all, my first voyage to sea would result in my return home with a pair of wings sprouting from the region of my shoulder blades.

Reaching the dock gate, father explained our mission to the policeman on duty. That worthy allowed us to pass through with a few words of advice about not tripping over mooring lines in the dark and falling into the dock. Thanking him, we passed on and very soon arrived alongside my ship.

She was in absolute darkness, for in those days the dock laws prohibited any lights or fires on board ships in dock after nine p. m. The clock in the old custom-house boomed out twelve as my father hugged me to him and said, "Well, my boy, we must leave you now. Write to us at every opportunity and don't forget to say your prayers."

I promised this with a good deal of misgiving and turned to my brother, who also gave me a hug and said, "Bring home a monkey or a parrot. Good-by, good-by."

With that they turned away and began to retrace their steps to the dock gates. I crept gingerly over the gangway and stood on deck listening until the last sound of their footsteps died away. In the silence and the darkness I felt mighty lonesome, and I firmly believe that if they had returned at that moment and suggested my returning home to comparative comfort and security I would have swallowed the anchor and gone with them.

But no, the darkness swallowed them up, and before long the damp chilliness of the night urged me to get some shelter. I was quite familiar with my surroundings by now and soon found the old watchman, who was snoring peacefully in the galley. He unlocked the half-deck door and let me in, advising me to get some sleep, as we would be getting under way at about four thirty a. m.

This was easier said than done, the place being both dark and full of bags, sea chests, parcels, beds—all thrown inside higgledy-piggledy the afternoon before. I was groping about, striking matches and trying to sort out my own gear, when familiar voices announced the arrival of Bill and Tommy.

They had both had one over the eight, being rather incoherent and smelling strongly of beer. Stumbling over the doorstep in the darkness, they both fell amongst the assembled bags, beds, and boxes, and lay there swearing roundly for about five minutes. Bill then roused himself and produced a match and about one quarter inch of candle, which he lit and stuck on the table in a little pool of its own grease.

Catching sight of me, looking forlorn and miserable as I felt, Bill immediately adopted the big-brotherly air and hurriedly helped me open my straw bed. Next he aided me in pulling some blankets from the top of my sea bag. Bidding me pull off my boots, coat, and trousers, he bundled me into my bunk and threw the blankets over me saying, "There you are, my hearty—snug as a bug in a rug!"

He then turned his attention to the now-snoring Tommy, and having shaken him into some semblance of life, he explained in lurid terms that the candle would not last another minute. The two of them then hastily threw off their outer clothing, spread their beds out, and took flying leaps into their top bunks. They then held an argument as to who would put out the guttering end of the candle, which by now was threatening to set fire to the wooden table.

Finally Bill put an end to the argument with a well-directed boot, and in a few minutes they were both sound asleep and snoring like young porkers. As for me sleep seemed to be out of the question. The indescribable "ship smell," which seemed to consist of a mixture of rope, tar, and kerosene, mingled with the acrid fumes of the defunct candle and the rather unpleasant odor of my new straw bed, almost choked me. I tossed about, utterly uncomfortable, rather scared of my new and rough surroundings, and fairly miserable.

Next to the half deck, and only separated from it by a thin wooden partition, was the forecabin. During the night the

sailors came down in twos and threes in various stages of drunkenness and argued long and loudly in a strange tongue. I found out later that this was Welsh. Several scuffles took place, then loud thuds of falling bodies, groans, curses, and then silence.

**I** SUPPOSE I must eventually have dropped off to sleep, for suddenly I awoke with a start as our door was flung wide open. A huge figure in oilskins, carrying a hurricane lamp, came into the room and shouted, "Now then, you young devils, out of it! Show a leg!"

Striding over to the bunks, he pulled the blankets off us in turn. Bill and Tommy jumped out and began dressing and cursing at the same time. They advised me to do the same and be quick about it if I didn't want to feel the weight of the mate's boot.

Feeling dead sleepy and cold, I scrambled out and dressed by the light of a filthy-smelling oil lamp. Tommy announced that it was raining heavily, so we all got into our oilskins and sea boots. A few minutes later the mate came around again and hustled us out on deck. He then went into the forecabin and started hustling the sailors out, using a variety of oaths and blasphemy such as I had never dreamed of in my young life.

As the sailors appeared on deck the second mate mustered us all by the fore rigging—twelve able seamen, carpenter, sailmaker, and three apprentices. Dividing us into gangs, he sent one gang aft, and the other, including myself, went forward with the mate, the orders being to unmoor ship. A couple of dock hands let go our ropes and a small boat ran a rope out from our forecabin head to the dock gate. This was taken to the capstan, and, shipping the bars, we hove round. Gradually we hove the ship out into the center of the dock and pointed her through the dock gates. I had, because of the darkness, only a very hazy idea of what was going on, but I stuck near Bill, always studiously avoiding the mate, who was stumbling around in a long yellow oilskin coat, bestowing maledictions upon everybody.

Having worked the ship through several docks and basins, we finally tied her up in a gateway leading into the river to await high water. It was about half past seven

in the morning by this time, and just growing daylight. When this task was completed we were sent to breakfast. Cold, wet, and famished, the prospect of food and drink seemed good to me. I went to the half deck and was ordered to the galley for the breakfast for all the inmates.

Breakfast consisted of a can of coffee, a quantity of porridge—called *burgoo*—a loaf of bread, and a slab of rancid butter. Taking it along to the half deck, I found the carpenter and sailmaker there, they apparently sharing the half deck with the apprentices. I rooted my cup, plate, knife, fork, and spoon out of my bag and we all sat around on our sea chests and commenced breakfast.

I first tackled some of the porridge. There was no milk, but a little sandy-looking brown sugar mixed with it made it almost palatable. Then I tried the coffee! The sailmaker described it as ground mahogany root, but he was flattering it. It was hot and wet, that was all there was to commend it. However, I was mighty hungry, and I had to have something to wash down the huge chunk of bread and margarine. So I closed my eyes and gulped down a cup, feeling the sooner I got used to rough food and bad conditions the better for me.

We had about half an hour for breakfast, then the mate turned us out again. The men were sent aloft to square up the sails and yards in preparation for making sail. I was left to clear up the half deck.

Very soon a loud tooting of a steam whistle announced the fussy arrival of the tug *Sarah Jolliffe* outside the dock gates ready to take us in tow. The dock master walked along the quay and held a short conversation with the captain, during which the gates were slowly opened. The tug backed in and passed us a long wire, which was made fast on the forecabin head. Then, almost before I realized it, we were towing out into the river and my first voyage had begun.

It was not a very glorious departure. The only people to see us off were three or four slatternly-looking females with themselves and their babies wrapped up in colored shawls. They waved to several of our sailors as we passed out. In addition to these there were half a dozen pierhead laborers and the dock master. They stood there idly gazing at us till we had cleared the gate. Then they started heaving

around on some sort of contraption for closing the gate again and forgot all about us.

I had been nursing a faint hope that some of my family might have found their way down to say good-by, but nobody showed up and I began to feel a little homesick. Leaning against the rail, I watched the busy river scene with its familiar buildings and landmarks as we dropped down the river on the first of the ebb tide. I was only a little over fourteen years old, and this was the first time I had ever been away from home, friends, and the comfort and security which they implied.

To put it bluntly I was still tied to my mother's apron strings.

Tommy staggered past under a large coil of rope about this time, and, seeing my troubled gaze, he said, "Cheer up! Twelve months from now you'll see it all again. Give us a hand here."

His words brought me back to realism again, and putting my shoulder under part of his load, I helped him along with it to the poop. Bidding me keep it clear for him, he seized one end of the rope and slipped up the mizzen rigging with it like a monkey, after explaining that it was the gaff-topsail sheet, and that he was going to bend it onto the sail.

As I stood there watching him the captain came over to me and said, "Well, young shaver, what do they call you at home?"

I replied that at home I was known as "Gordon."

"Oh, oh," replied the captain. "That'll never do; haven't you got another name?"

"Yes," I said. "My first name is James."

"Ah, James—Jimmy. That's it—we'll call you Jimmy in the future."

He walked across to the other side of the poop and told the mate of his decision. The mate then roared "Jimmy" at me at the top of his voice. The tone stirred me with uneasiness.

I went over to him and he said, "In the future, my lad, when you hear that call jump, and jump lively! D'ye hear?"

I assured him that I was all attention, to which he replied, "All right. Get out of it." This was his favorite mode of expression. And so I was rechristened "Jimmy," and remained so for the next four and one half years.

**R**OUND about noon we were piped to dinner, and again I went to the galley to get the grub. The food was handed out in tin kids—deep bowls with handles on each side. First the cook handed me a kid of greasy-looking vegetable soup. Then he fitted another kid containing a horrible-looking chunk of boiled beef, and some carrots and turnips, into the top of that. On top of that kid went another, containing some very dirty-looking potatoes in their jackets.

I carried these along to the half deck and put them down in the center of the deck. We then sat around on our sea chests and helped ourselves from them.

By this time we were getting along toward the Bar light vessel which lies at the entrance to the dreaded channel of the Mersey Estuary. A stiff breeze was blowing, causing a joggle of a sea to run, which gave us quite a little motion. This, combined with the smell of the boiled beef, made me feel a bit squeamish. The others urged me to forget about such things and have a good feed, saying that it would make a man of me.

So, wishing to be a hard case, I forced myself to eat a little, and for a time at any rate I felt better for it. Having finished and removed the kids to the galley, I sat and listened to the others as they lay back on the chest, sucking at reeking pipes and discussing the captain, mates, and ship. They seemed to delight in drawing comparisons between our ship and the last ones they had been in. Bill and Tommy were at a disadvantage here, as they had only been in this one ship.

But Chips and Sails had been many years at sea, and apparently they thought it a point of honor never to make two voyages in the same ship. During this talk the tug blew a series of blasts on its whistle, indicating that its part of the contract was nearly fulfilled. The time was at hand for us to make sail and prepare to cast them off.

The mates came bustling forward and all hands were turned out to make sail. Several hands jumped aloft and began to cast off gaskets. As soon as sails were loosed the crowd on deck sheeted them home and hoisted away on the halyards. We soon had the fore and main-topsails, staysails, and a couple of jibs on her. We were sailing along on the port tack and almost overrunning the tug.

A few moments later the captain gave the order to let go the tug. Two or three hands headed by the mate dashed up on the forecastle head and threw the wire off the bitts. As it streaked out through the chock in a shower of sparks the mate said, "There goes our last link with home."

The tug turned in its tracks and blew three long blasts on its whistle—which means good-by and good luck among seamen the world over—and soon disappeared astern.

I write of all this now, because I know what must have happened, but at the time I was in a sort of daze and just pulled at whatever the others did. I was amazed to see the white sails spreading out above us as if by magic. Whatever I did not know, I was keenly aware that the tug had left us, and I realized that the mate's words were only too true. Our last link with home was gone.

After setting some more sail all hands were ordered aft to the break of the poop, where the mates looked us over and picked watches. The mate had first choice, then he and the second mate picked each a man in turn till I was the only one left. After some discussion between them I was put in the mate's watch with Bill.

By now the ship was heeling over to the breeze and every now and then a spurt of water washed through the scuppers, telling that we were making good headway. I began to feel very seasick, and to my great relief Bill told me that it was our watch below and that I was free to turn in until four o'clock in the afternoon.

After a very exhausting spasm of the dreaded malady I threw myself into my bunk fully dressed and fell asleep with the feeling that I did not care what became of me. I must have slept about two hours, but it seemed like two minutes, when Tommy burst in. With a cry of, "Oh-ho, you sleepers—show a leg, show a leg. One bell's just gone! He intimated that it was time for us to turn out and keep the first dogwatch.

I raised a weary head, felt deathly sick, and came to the conclusion that the bunk was the best place for me. I lay back again after that, feeling fed up and far from home.

Bill turned out after that, and he and Tommy made another effort to arouse me. They finally decided that I was too sick to be of any use and let me lie. Eight bells went, and in a few minutes the mate let out

a roar for me. Not getting any response he came along to the half deck and the next thing I knew I was hauled out of my bunk by the scruff of the neck and shaken like a rabbit.

Lugging me out on deck, the mate called for a pannikin. Then, watching his chance, he scooped up about half a pint of salt water from the scuppers as the ship heeled over. "There," he said, "swallow that, you young divil." Holding me up by the collar, he made me drink the lot.

"There," he said, "that'll cure you. Nothin' like a cup of clean salt water for boys that can't turn out in their watch on deck. Go on now, get out of it." He gave me a shove along the deck and told Bill to take me on the poop.

For the next half hour I was very ill, but having got rid of the salt water, I began to feel better. From that day to this I have never been seasick again. Brutal as I thought the mate was at the time, I feel now that he did me a good turn.

Bill explained to me that my duty during the night was to strike the bells every half hour of my watch on deck. The clock was in the companionway on the poop and the bell hung on the wheel box by the helmsman. The mates kept their watches on the weather side of the poop and the apprentices on the lee side.

At six we were relieved by Tommy and went below until eight o'clock, when the second dogwatch was over. Our supper at six consisted of cold beef, biscuits, and tea. I managed to eat some of it and kept it down.

At eight o'clock the wind rose to a gale and all hands were called to take in sail. As we stepped out on the sloping deck in our sea boots and oilskins we found it was raining hard and dark as the inside of a cow. Heavy spray was sweeping across the ship, and the noise of the wind in the rigging and the flapping of canvas mingled with the shouts of men had made it all seem a very bewildering and dangerous sort of occasion.

Bill piloted me to the poop, grabbing at the weather rails and rigging as we went in order to keep our footing. Reaching the poop, Bill bade me watch the clock and then disappeared. I groped about in the darkness and tried to get some shelter from the rain and spray. Every now and again, not having got my sea legs, a sud-

den lurch would catch me unawares. Then I would slide down into the scupper, in a heap. Homeluck, woe, misery, and frighten, I would have given anything to have been ashore in the bosom of my family.

Just as I struck one bell at eight thirty a voice called to me from the weather side. Going over I found the captain there sheltering behind a weather cloth stretched across the main rigging. He was holding on by the shrouds with one hand and with the other he grabbed me and bade me stand there with him. Away forward I could hear the mast shouting and howling in angry tones and the noise of flapping canvas and men singing out as they pulled and hauled. It was all a mystery to me, and I began to wonder whether I should ever be able and strong enough to take part in such work.

The captain seemed to read my thoughts because he suddenly said, "How would you like to be up there on the fore-top-sail yard, Jimmy?"

I don't know what reply I made, if any; and he went on then to tear my heart-strings out with his next remarks.

"Wouldn't you rather," he asked, "be home now, in front of your fire with your father and mother?"

About this time I think I dissolved into tears for home was the thing I most wanted. He tried to cheer me up with a few kindly remarks and then closed the interview by gruffly ordering me to watch the nose and not forget to strike the bells. I left him and in the darkness of the companionway I indulged in a good weep, with the clock for company.

Later Bill returned and explained that they had finished taking in sail and that she was snuggled down for the night. I was glad to hear it and felt that I wouldn't mind being snuggled down myself. Slowly the time went on, and at one bell—quarter to twelve—we called the other watch.

At eight bells—midnight—the newly-don watch groped their way aft to the break of the poop. The mate, having consulted himself that all were present, gave the order, "Relieve the wheel and look-out."

Tommy having relieved us on the poop Bill and I scrambled forward to the dark and dismal half deck. There by the light of a smoky oil lamp, we hung our coats and our wet clothes and our boots

and turned in. Bill lay for five minutes, smoking a smoking pipe, and the old sail-maker, awakened by our entrance, also lit a clay pipe. They discussed the weather for a while. As for me the old smells again assailed me—the stow had now slightly damp being twice as odorous as before. The blankets also had taken on that strange ship smell which was made worse by the fumes of the lamp and stale tobacco smoke. I lay there for a while, wondering why men ever went to sea, and then the steady mooring of the others gradually lulled me to sleep.

**A**T a quarter to four in the morning, Tommy came in and called us. It required several good shakes to get me out, but Tommy knew that he couldn't come below till we had relieved him on the poop, so he made sure by sundry thumps that we were fully awake.

Feeling desperately tired and sleepy, we struggled into our oilskins and at eight bells mustered aft and took over the watch. So I was initiated into the watch-and-watch system—four hours on and four hours off. It exists among seamen at the present day. To young boys, who need long hours of sleep it was a dreadful hardship, but we learned the knack of going to sleep anywhere at any time of the night or day and insomnia was unknown amongst us.

That day the cook—he was both cook and steward—issued our weekly slack of provisions according to the board of trade scale. This consisted of one half a pound of butter, one half a pound of marmalade, and one pound of sugar per man. We each took along three empty tins to hold the slack, and these we kept in our lockers and used as required.

Other provisions such as meat, peas, beans, oatmeal, and so forth were not slacked up. The cook would weigh out the required amount, cook it and hand it over to us at mealtimes. Fresh water was slacked out daily at four o'clock in the afternoon, each man being limited to three quarts. Of this he kept a quart for himself and the other two quarts went into the galley tank to be used for cooking.

At four o'clock each afternoon the second mate, who was in charge of the drinking water, would unlock the little brass pump and stand by to issue the water. We carried it forward in specially-marked buckets. So many buckets to the half

deck, so many buckets to the forecabin, so many to the galley, and so many to the cabin.

The ship's supply of water is carried in two large tanks in the hold, and it had to be carefully preserved. We ran short once during a five and one half months' voyage and had to half fill a tank with rain water. It was very unpalatable.

Biscuits were whacked out daily, but we were usually allowed "full and plenty without waste" of these. They were kept in common boxes known as "bread targes," which were hung up in the forecabin and half deck. Every biscuit is stamped with forty-two holes in it. There is probably a good reason why the bakers do this, perhaps it is to allow the heat to get into the biscuit. Whatever the reason the holes also made fine refuges for weevils. These are found to infest most bread after it is more than five or six months old.

No one ever dreamed of taking a biscuit from the large without first giving it a couple of taps upside down to get rid of weevils and dust.

For about two weeks we had fresh beef every day, then it ran out and we commenced on salt beef one day and salt pork the next. On Saturday we had Harnet Lane, which is Australian named mutton. "Harnet Lane" referred to a notorious woman who was brutally murdered in Australia many years ago!

Potatoes ran out after about three weeks, despite the fact that they were picked over and cleared frequently. They were bad very fast after they started and had to be thrown overboard. After they were gone we were entitled to soft bread twice a week. The bread was baked in small loaves weighing three quarters of a pound and called "rooties."

The end of the potatoes also marked the beginning of lime-juice. Each day at noon the cook would appear at the cabin door with a pail of lime-juice and water mixed and measured to board of trade requirements. Each man was compelled by law to drink his cupful daily. It was a pleasant drink and no one ever refused it. It was supposed to keep down scurvy.

Dinner at noon was the only meal of the day when we had cooked food. Breakfast consisted of coffee, biscuits, butter, marmalade, and any cold beef you had left. Supper, at six in the evening, consisted of the same thing, with tea instead of coffee. In

cold weather we got porridge for breakfast, and on Saturday we got boiled rice and molasses with the Harnet Lane.

British ships have always been known as "lime-juicers" and were noted for their poor feeding. During my apprenticeship I often went to bed hungry and thirsty. When I first complained of being hungry I was told to go and get a load of "wired puddings." This meant putting your head on the rail and drawing in great breaths of ozone!

But I must get on with the voyage. We had bad weather for several days and had to beat down the Irish Sea, the wind being southeast and very cold. Then the wind backed around to the northeast and we ran south before it, very soon getting into fine weather.

**A**S my homesickness wore off I began to get to know the crew. They were mostly Welshmen and good sailors, and they all came from the same little town in which the captain lived when he was at home. This gave rise to a friendly spirit among them. The cook and sail-maker were Germans who had both been in the German navy. The cook was a hard case and never wore anything but trousers and vest in the coldest of weather. If ever we had to reef topsails night or day, he would be the first aloft, and he worked like a trojan.

The carpenter was a moodily-looking Welshman with a drooping mustache. His hobby was drink, and his only sober moments were those aboard ship when he couldn't get it. He was very superstitious and nervous and believed in ghosts.

As we got down into the fine weather we got our bedding out and dried it in the sun and opened our chests and overhauled all our gear. This was called having "sailor's pleasure." I found several little surprises in my chest, placed there by my dear mother when packing it. She seemed to have guessed exactly the little things I would need and like. Finding them brought back the pangs of homesickness for a while.

Our shore clothes were all carefully aired, brushed and stowed away ready for use when we reached port. We decorated our bunks with photos and pictures cut from illustrated papers. Pictures of sailors saying good-bye to their girls were given favorites. After them in point of popularity came pictures of jolly girls.

My remarks about fresh water might indicate that we were short of water for washing clothes. Often enough we were, but advantage was taken of every shower of rain to catch water in tubs, barrels, and buckets, which were always kept in readiness. But there was not a great deal of washing to do, a sailing ship is a very clean place, and in fine weather we wore a minimum of clothing.

After being out a few weeks we got into the northeast trades, which carried us down to the equator. There we got into the doldrums, an area of calms, heavy rain squalls, and baffling breezes. Advantage has to be taken of every puff of wind to get through this area, and consequently the yards are being constantly hauled around from one tack to the other. Sails have to be hauled up, too, to prevent them flapping themselves to pieces as the ship rolls about in the oily swells.

This constant pulling and hauling in the rain and heat makes men irritable, and we had several quarrels and fights among the hands. The rule was to let them fight it out, and every one stood around to see fair play.

During the heavy rains it was the custom to get one's blankets out, spread them on the deck, and soap and wash them. Apropos of this one of the sailors told a story. It seems that a sailor named Jack Harris had signed in a ship and was due to be on board in time when she sailed at seven the next morning.

Having put his gear aboard the night before, Jack wandered uptown in search of a little amusement to celebrate his last night ashore. He was evidently a believer in the old adage that a "sailor has a wife in every port." Having had a few drinks here and there, he found a young woman who fell in with his ideas and they started to celebrate together.

When he got up next morning, in a hurry to get down to his ship, he discovered that he had been robbed of everything he had. Hurriedly casting about the room in which he had been sleeping, he saw a large bar of soap. It seemed to be the only portable object that would somewhat compensate for the loss of his fifteen shillings and at the same time be useful.

Slipping the bar under his coat, Jack quickly let himself out and made his way down to join the ship. The scene now shifts to the bark *Silverdale*, wallowing

about in the long oily swells of the doldrums. Jack had brought his blankets out on deck together with his purloined bar of soap and commenced to scrub his gear vigorously. He discovered some unwonted friction on the soap as he used it, and, looking to what caused it, he found his fifteen shillings embedded in the bar!

This story was received rather skeptically, but nevertheless, after a pause of astonishment it was succeeded by several other yarns equally tall—all men are liars, anyhow.

After working through the doldrums we picked up the southeast trades, which carried us well south toward the roaring forties. As the trades grew light we sent down our light fine-weather sails and replaced them with our heavy suit, ready for bad weather. Getting down to southward of the Cape of Good Hope, we struck the prevailing westerly gales and commenced to run east for Australia.

This part of the trip is known as "running the easting down," and the region is notorious for its tremendous seas. Many ships do not run well before heavy following seas. They steer badly or are inclined to poop, which means that they take heavy rolling seas over the stern. Such ships have to be hove to in time to prevent them being swept. My ship, the bark *County of Pembroke*, had a low stern and a reputation for being pooped easily.

Despite this our captain would keep her running before it till sometimes the seas were so high and dangerous that it was impossible to heave to, because once we got into the trough of the sea she would have rolled the sticks out of herself before she came up into the wind. On one occasion which I remember we ran too long, and the only thing to do was to keep sail on her in order to try and keep ahead of the mountainous seas that rolled up astern and threatened to engulf us. Every one was anxious, from the skipper down. And I must admit that the sight of those tremendous crashing walls of water breaking angrily around our stern scared me stiff.

About six o'clock in the evening she suddenly took a purler right over the stern and swept every fitting off the poop. The helmsman was picked up in the way of the mainmast, half-drowned and with a broken arm. The captain and mate escaped by jumping into the mizzen rigging.



I happened to be standing forward of the mizzenmast for shelter and heard the mate yell, "Hang on, everybody, here she comes!"

At that moment two great walls of water, divided by the mast, swept by on each side of me carrying all sorts of shattered deck fittings. I hung on all right, and got nothing worse than a thorough wetting in the ice-cold water. The cabin and storerooms were flooded, and great gaping holes were left in the deck where the skylight and companion once stood.

Immediately the carpenter and one watch got busy with planks, canvas, and nails and covered up the gaps. The other watch was busy down below, baling out the quarters and storerooms and saving as many of the dry stores as they could. Fortunately she ran through the night without further mishap. Next morning we had everything dried up down below and found that damage to the stores had not been as serious as we expected.

**B**Y this time I had become quite a young sailor and was able to go aloft with the best of them except in very heavy weather. Then I was ordered to stay on deck, much to my disgust.

Exactly ninety-three days and six hours after leaving the dock at Liverpool we arrived off Melbourne and dropped anchor. I was up aloft furling the sails when the captain shouted up, "Hurry up, Jimmy, I've got something for you."

Finishing up my job, I slid down a backstay like a monkey and received from the captain a bundle of about twenty letters. Every relative on both sides of the family had written, wishing me good luck on my first voyage. Most of them were full of good advice and I read them all. They did not, however, prevent me falling from grace, although in a fairly innocent way.

One night I was ashore and heard some of our sailors singing and enjoying themselves in a saloon on the water front. I looked in and saw a room full of men and women, all sitting around drinking and smoking and evidently having a great party.

One of the sailors caught sight of me and insisted on my having a glass of beer. Feeling quite proud of myself, being in cash, grown up, and in distinguished company, I drank the beer and then offered to play the piano for them. I had taken

lessons at the instrument for three years and could rattle the ivories pretty well. All hands were delighted at this, as the man who was performing at the instrument at the moment was the only one in the room who could play, and he was the world's worst pianist.

Soon I was rattling off any tune they wanted and the singing and dancing became fast and furious. The glasses of beer for me also accumulated on top of the piano. Suddenly a hush fell on the place and a loud raucous voice yelled, "Come on, young fellow, out of it! Damn your eyes, what the hell are you doin' here?"

A huge hand seized me by the back of the neck and I was propelled rapidly toward the ship with sundry kicks and cuffs.

Next day I got a severe reprimand from the captain and my leave was stopped for three days. I had broken the spirit of my indentures by entering an alehouse or tavern. Thus ingloriously ended my first adventure in a saloon. But I regret to say that it was not my last! However, I was not caught again.

After a month in Melbourne, during which we discharged our general cargo and loaded up with grain in bags, we sailed for Queenstown, Ireland, for orders. We went around the dreaded Cape Horn in the depth of winter and experienced a lot of bad weather on this passage. Eventually, after a passage of one hundred and ten days of uneventful sailing, we arrived and anchored in Queenstown harbor.

Here samples of our cargo were taken from the hold and sent to various corn markets in England and Scotland. Then, after lying idle for ten days, word suddenly came for us to proceed to Liverpool. This caused great joy on board, for we might easily have been ordered to any other port or even to France or Germany. During the voyage I had grown so much that my shore clothes would not fit me. So while in Queenstown the captain advanced me money to get a new suit of clothes from the tailor who came off to the ship.

We towed around to Liverpool, arriving there without mishap. I landed home at seven o'clock one evening and burst in on the assembled family. What a warm welcome they gave me to be sure! The long-lost sailor laddie just home from the sea! I can never forget the pained look that passed over my dear mother's face when she saw my bell-bottomed trousers!

# Watch Below

By Frank J. Leahy



McGeehan found that a water tender with a ticket didn't get on well with the first engineer.

**W**ELL, ye're twenty-one, ain't yer, and six foot tall, and four foot across, and Irish?" said Fireman Sykes insinuatingly. "I always had an idea myself the Irish would fight at the drop o' the hat."

"Big Tim" McGeehan, the water tender, set down his cup of black coffee on No. 4 hatch and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. Then that same hand, now a fist, descended with a resounding whack into the open palm of the other, as his broad, honest features changed into indignant savagery.

"You know I can fight, Sykes," he said.

"Well, why don't yer? I come and tell yer what I overhear, that ye're not goin' ter swing on the checks to-night, but get in the bunks and heave coal, and all you do——"

There was another sudden sweep of Tim McGeehan's arm, followed by a splatter of black coffee across the steel of the after well deck as the tin cup went hurtling through the air, banging at the rail and plopping into the sea.

"All I do is sit and take it, I guess, huh?" growled the big Irishman. "But you don't come and tell me what I'm goin' to do about it, like a guy with sense would—with me only a common ordinary petty officer and him the first assistant engineer. You ain't so dumb as not to know the difference. It don't matter that he's got it in for me because I copped his dame in Liverpool, and has been droppin' wrenches through the gratings at me, and shootin' live steam at me, and makin' me pack hot flanges behind a steamin' boiler. Any-way, it don't matter on the high seas. He's

an officer, see? And I ain't. Fight him? Say, Sykes, maybe he can fight, too—he's that big and tough—but in a set-to, him and me, I'd knock the runnin' lights clean out——"

Big Tim made an empty gesture with his hands, stood up and swerved about.

"But what's the use o' me sayin' what I could do, when I ain't goin' to do it? I ain't that kind of a sailorman to think I could get away with it. I've been sailin' in these old tramp steamers for twelve years, and I know how tall a water tender is alongside an engineer. I'm in charge o' the fireroom, sure; and on my watch I keep water in the boilers, I'm boss stoker. I speed up a pump once in a while. But the articles don't give me the right to tie into a guy like Jernigan, even if he is bucko, and drunk all the time, and tryin' to hand me a dirty deal on account of a dame. And it don't matter that I got a first assistant's ticket myself, either. I'm sailin' water tender on this *Kilmarnock*. See?"

Fireman Sykes grunted and cocked his ear. "There goes seven bells," he said.

"Yeah," replied Big Tim with a growl, filling his corncob pipe and lighting it. "Another half hour and we got the twelve to four to go in a lousy stokehole—instead o' sleepin' this time o' night like guys with jobs on shore. And with a drunken engineer on the throttle at that. You tell me he's drunk. Course he is. D'you ever see him sober? One o' these times the whole works down there is goin' sky high because he ain't on the job. But it won't be while I'm on his watch, because I'm keepin' an eye on him and on everything. He knows it, too, mister. But he's forgettin' something if he tries to make me heave coal in the bunkers to-night. And just on account of a dame! Can you imagine that? Well, listen, I signed on here as water tender, and that's what I tend. First Assistant Engineer William 'Bucko' Jernigan can go plumb to hell and fry an egg. Big Tim McGeehan talkin'."

Sykes registered inquiry.

"What're you figurin' on? Goin' to the chief?"

**T**HE Irishman glowered. "You would have to think o' something like that," he said reprovingly. "Well, say, you heard me say I can fight. But you didn't hear me say I needed anybody to fight for me. I do what I do, see? If I don't

fancy passin' coal, I don't, and I stand up in front of Bucko Jernigan and tell him why. I'm a seafarin' man, and I obey orders, but I'm standin' within a seafarin' man's rights. I don't pass coal for Jernigan, nor for any son of a sea cook like him. See if I do."

"Well, ye're Jernigan's size and can get away with it, I guess," conceded Sykes, his glance lowering to his sparser self.

"It don't call for size, sonny," said Big Tim, "when it comes to bein' a man. It's knowin' right from wrong, and backin' up the right whether you be the size of a sea urchin or as big as the poop deck. I'm right and Jernigan's wrong when it comes to me passin' coal, and because I know that, and not because I'm big enough to say it with fists, is why I'm goin' to get away with not doin' it. Though maybe I wouldn't like to plop him one—just on account o' that dame."

The smaller man nodded as a man from the eight to twelve passed on his way to call the midwatch. Big Tim looked sympathetically at the other and added to his positive theory on right and wrong: "And maybe I will plop him if I get mad enough." Together they leaned on the bulwarks, their otherwise occupied minds following out over the moonlit swell of the north Atlantic.

"Let's go down," suggested Sykes, as others of the relief watch shambled forward. "Quarter of."

"I'm thinkin'," said Big Tim McGeehan, "that there's goin' to be trouble on this watch. If there is, I'm goin' to make a real dance of it. See if I don't."

"Well, paste him one fer me," said Sykes, entering the engine room at the top grating.

"Who said anything about pastin' anybody?" growled Tim irritably, clattering down the ladder behind his companion.

The *Kilmarnock's* reciprocating engines were turning over at a speed designed to send the ship forward at a twelve-knot clip—a little slower than usual on account of the heavy sea that was running. Though even at twelve knots there seemed to be some trouble in the fireroom at the moment of relief watch to keep the steam up to the required two-hundred-fifty-pound pressure. Tim McGeehan, arriving on the floorplates, was greeted by the man he relieved with the details of the preceding strenuous four-hour watch.

"Dirty coal," he said. "Hauled fires twice, and they gotta be hauled again now. Clinkers right up. And the 'Old Man's' on the bridge, whistlin' down here every five minutes to keep the steam up. As if we wasn't down here pullin' our guts out and sweatin' blood and chokin' with dust to keep the steam up. Wish I hadn't shipped on the old scow. Well"—he mopped his grimy face with a grimier sweat cloth—"she's all yours."

"I'll get her up," said Big Tim, crackling down on a water check. "Go ahead, Bill, and turn in." Then he bawled across the fireroom: "Slice No. 1, you guys! And coal her over easy. We gotta haul clinkers in No. 2."

"This lousy workhouse!" grumbled Sykes as he jammed a slice bar into the fire box and wrestled it around adroitly. "Some day I'm goin' ter quit these tubs and go ter studyin' my perfession."

"Horse collars!" scoffed a coal passer from somewhere in the mine gloom of the starboard bunker.

"More coal!" called Big Tim. "Push back No. 4 door there, you, 'Dutch!' Hey, Carlson, start haulin' your fires now! One o' you coal passers get on a wettin'-down hose! Let's go!"

**W**HAT'S the matter with the steam, McGeehan?" The query, delivered in a hard-boiled snarl, came from a big mountain of a man, black-eyed, tattooed about the arms and hands, unshaven, who had appeared out of the engine room and stood in the passageway between the two big water-tube boilers. "What d'you think this is, a tea party?"

"Dirty coal, first," Big Tim flung back at him. "I'll have her up when I get these fires cleaned."

"Ah, alibi, you big stiff! You don't know how to keep a head o' steam, that's what's the matter."

Big Tim bit his lip and spat disdainfully. He seemed to struggle with himself unsuccessfully to avoid a retort to the attack upon his ability.

"Come on and show me how, then."

The first assistant's eyes lighted, and he advanced a step. Perhaps because the ship was rolling, and perhaps because he had been drinking, there was a stagger in that advance. He confronted Big Tim, standing there inches away from him, and shoved his hands into his belt.

"Listen here, you big Irish four-flusher," he sneered, and his jaw went out, "I don't like your looks, and for two raps I'd change 'em. I'm the main push on this watch, and what I say goes. I'm sayin' you're incompetent. Now what're you goin' t' do about that?" He paused for the other's reply, which did not come. "The skipper's whistlin' for steam. And I'm tellin' you I want steam. Two hundred and fifty pounds of it, see? Get it up there inside o' five minutes, or in the bunkers you go. Now let's have you."

The firemen straightened from their labors to observe the result of Jernigan's outburst. From the port and starboard bunkers two grimy faces peered out. Even the oiler, feeling the main bearings, craned his neck to see. Everybody, in fact, showed concern except Big Tim McGeehan. He peered up at his water glasses, cracked open a check, and swaggered over to look in a peep hole of No. 2 boiler.

"Nice fire you got there, Dutch," he remarked. "Got those clinkers all out, Carlson? Pull your fire over, then. Take her easy. No use killin' yourself on this lousy job. One o' you coal passers there, start hoppin' these ashes."

"You'll think it's a lousy job if you don't have that steam up in five minutes," said Jernigan, turning toward the engine room. "And you got fifty pounds to go."

He staggered off through the passageway, stumbled over the coaming of the water-tight door, and went sprawling to the engine-room floorplates.

Those watching him, seeing his arrogance end thus, let out an unwary roar of delight. In reply to it, Jernigan scrambled to his feet and flung back at them a lusty curse and stamped up the ladder to the ice-machine room.

That no drunkenness is permitted aboard ship, particularly in one of her officers while in responsibility of a watch, was, without doubt, known to Chief Engineer Kunnert of the *Kilmarnock*. But he, being a man who, by day, spent his time almost entirely on the bridge—except when afflicted with frequent spells of seasickness—and, by night, in his cabin, the continual drinking of liquids stronger than water by his first assistant, Bucko Jernigan, failed to come to his attention. Therefore, this night, Chief Kunnert, being physically and mentally unfit on account of the rather heavy weather, had no knowledge of Jerni-

gan's unconscionable condition; and Jernigan, knowing that, availed himself of all lack of restraint by partaking freely from the bottle which he had concealed in the ice-machine room at the top grating.

And there, having delivered himself to McGeehan, he braved the awful stench of ammonia which pervaded the room to guzzle deeply; while down on the floorplates Big Tim McGeehan alone remained responsible for the watch and any demands that might be made from the bridge.

It was a clear night over the sea, but a strong wind raked up swooping waves and valleys that made rough passage for the *Kilmarnock*. In the bowels of her that strong wind roared down the ventilators in a cold blast that swept into the ash pans, zooming upward through the grate bars. With good steaming coal, no difficulty at all would have existed in keeping a head of two hundred and fifty pounds. But her coal was dirty dust that formed clinkers and choked out the draft. The fires of No. 2 boiler having been cleaned, they were clinkering again by the time No. 1 had been hauled; and though more of Jernigan's five minutes had elapsed, not a pound more than two hundred and twenty-five could be raised of the required two hundred and fifty. Slicing them, leveling them off, coaling them over, the firemen nursed their fires, scarcely straightening their backs. Big Tim helped, giving his men a blow now and then between his watching the water level and keeping a lookout in the engine room, which last duty rightfully belonged to Bucko Jernigan.

**A**NSWER that bridge whistle!" he bawled at the oiler from the fireroom as the sudden imperative sound struck his ears. "See what the hell they want now."

The oiler jumped down from the second grating, where he had been pouring oil in a manifold, and pressed his ear against the bridge speaking tube. But the opened tube only roared with the wind that howled over the sea, tempered with the wholly inarticulate sound of a human voice.

"Can't understand a word," reported the oiler.

"Aw, what the hell!" replied McGeehan, retracing his steps. "They only want more steam down here, I s'pose. Answer all right."

But, for a moment or two, the uncaught message worried Big Tim, and he made a hurried round of inspection to make sure everything was all right there below. Then the whistle sounded again.

"What'll I answer this time?" asked the oiler.

"See if you can catch what's wanted. First mate's on the bridge, and he don't holler down here unless he wants something real. Get it? Here, let me listen."

But the roar was just as great when he pressed his ear to the tube, and the voice just as inarticulate. Then, on top of it, sounded the deep-throated blast of the ship's whistle.

"One o' you coal passers there!" bel-lowed Big Tim, running out to the fireroom. "You, 'Spike,' beat it up to the bridge and see what's wanted. Maybe hell's turned loose for all we know. Look alive now!"

No sooner had the messenger disappeared up the ladder than the telegraph gong burst into sudden clangor, the brass hand swinging around the speed-indicator dial and finally pausing at "Stop." As if he had been sprung from a trap, Big Tim leaped from the fireroom for the throttle. And he only the water tender of the watch! There was a rumble and growling in the crankpits for a long moment, and the engines were brought to a halt. So sudden was the halt, that the steam pressure leaped up to lift the safety valve.

"Close your ash pans!" yelled Tim. "Open your fire doors!"

The hiss of the blowing safety was suddenly topped by short frantic blasts of the siren. Then the telegraph clanged for full astern.

"What in hell're we runnin' into?" asked the oiler.

"And how the hell should I know?" replied Tim above the grumble of the engines that shook the *Kilmarnock* from stern to stern in a violent tremble. "Where in hell's Jernigan, is what I want to know?"

Again the telegraph demanded "Stop." Bringing the engines to a halt again, Big Tim leaped from the throttle into the fireroom to look at the water. Out of sight! He blew down the glasses of both boilers and discovered the water was low. Even with the rolling of the ship, the water did not appear. Bad business in a marine boiler! If the water went low enough, and the tubes went dry, there was

danger of the boilers blowing into ten thousand nothings. He ran for the feed pump and speeded it up. He heard the rush of water into the drums. The firemen fastened their eyes on the water glasses, worried creases furrowing their grimy, sweating brows. More blasts of the siren! The telegraph calling for "slow ahead!" Big Tim ran for the throttle, cracked it open, dove back into the fireroom, peered at the water glasses, saw water bouncing and rising at the bottom of them, slowed down the feed pump, closed down on his checks, and made for the engine room again. Then there returned the messenger from the bridge.

"Pretty near rammed a sailin' ship," he reported. "Darker'n hell on top. The mate was whistlin' down to us to stand by to change speed. Skipper's on the bridge now."

The telegraph rang for "full ahead," and Big Tim replied by opening the throttle and hurrying back to the fireroom to check on the water.

"If we hadn't slowed down and gone astern when we did," continued the messenger, "we'd of smashed right on through that old windjammer, bow right into her beam. I saw the whole works."

"Well, you saw too much," retorted Big Tim, irritable with stinging perspiration trickling into his eyes. "See about gettin' some coal out on these floorplates."

"You're a great guy to be on watch with, I'll say that," spoke up Dutch. "If it was left to Jernigan to handle that throttle, we'd be takin' to the boats now, I guess."

"To hell with Jernigan," scoffed Big Tim with an off-handedness at variance with the strain evident in his eyes. "He's only in the way down here. But this is his watch, and he's gotta answer for it."

The steam pressure was holding pretty steadily now, and there was a chance for the firemen to take a blow on their scoops. Sykes was the first to catch the import of Big Tim's words.

"You mean you're gonna have Jernigan take credit fer handlin' the throttle just now?" he said incredulously.

Big Tim filled his corncob and lit it with a coal from the fire box.

"Sure. He'll only lose his ticket if this gets out. What he needs is to have hell knocked outta him by a guy that weighs plenty. Anybody know where he went?"

"He's sittin' up by the ice-machine

room," said the oiler from the bulkhead door. "Sleepin', I guess."

"Mother o' St. Patrick!" exploded Big Tim. "That's a swell place to sleep." With which he was up the ladder, three steps at a time; and, in a moment, roughly shaking First Assistant Jernigan into wakefulness.

"Listen, you, mister, snap into it before I put a head on you," he snarled, with no more respect than there was due. "You get down on those floorplates and write up that log like I tell you. Stand up here! If the chief sees you, it'll be the irons, no foolin'. Hang onto me now. Hey, oiler, down there—give me a hand with this guy!" It took three minutes to jockey big Jernigan below, and when there, dazed as he was with liquor and the heat of the engine room and fumes of ammonia, he was unable to stand unsupported. "Come on, look alive!" snarled Big Tim, shaking the man, slapping his face with an open hand. "All right, chuck him in the bunker, you guys. Somebody's liable to look down here and see him."

But five minutes of rough handling of him in the bunker served little in bringing Jernigan to.

Consequently, it fell to the lot of Big Tim McGeehan to act as engineer of the watch, and, as such, he smoothed out all the rough edges. He began by destroying the bottle of whisky that he found under the ice machine; then he logged up the revolutions, various gauge readings, engine-speed changes, and so forth. He called together the men of his watch; emphasizing his words by shaking a mighty fist before their faces.

"He ain't worth a handful o' greasy waste as far as an engineer goes," he said; "but just the same, he's a shipmate, and it ain't for us to get him into a jam. Get me? You don't know nothin', see? If ever I find out one o' you guys squealed about this watch to-night, I'll flatten you. Now a couple o' you work on him in that bunker to bring him out of it."

It was a duty fallen to with alacrity. They took turns on Bucko Jernigan, trying to shake and pound consciousness back into him, letting loose lurid curses into his unhearing ears. One of the coal passers, a moist-eyed white rat of a man, was about to go so far in his efforts at resuscitation as to deliver Jernigan a kick in the face when Big Tim entered the bunker,

discovered the intention, and, with one sweep of his arm, sent the coal passer spinning into the coal.

"Say, what d'you birds think this is?" he demanded irately. "Get outta here! Maybe you think you're doin' something great by beatin' up on a man when he can't come back at you. Well, I'll bring this guy back myself. You, Sykes, keep your eye on that water, and tell the oiler to call me if he hears from the bridge. Keep after that steam, Dutch. Hand me a wettin'-down hose, one o' you coal passers."

The watch for a while thereafter caught only glimpses of what took place. Pressure on the hose, was one of Big Tim's demands, and then he warned them to watch the water. After that he seemed to forget them entirely in a deeper engrossment. With a man who, in his prime, ruled with drunken arrogance and who, upon rare sober occasions, claimed to be supreme in the engine room during his watch, Big Tim McGeehan tussled with all his wits and brawn, flavoring his attack with the stiff force of the salt-water hose; and slowly but surely Bucko Jernigan began to return to life.

Big Tim, stripped down to a cut-away undershirt, his face, arms and hands streaked with coal dust and streaming of sweat, mauled the equally besmeared, ammonia-dazed and drunken engineer as though he were a great rag doll from which even the stuffing had been tapped. That he was manhandling the first assistant engineer, and a tough and likely-to-be-resentful one, at that, did not disconcert him at this hour. Nor did it bother him that, should the chief or another officer come below to discover him there in the depths of the bunker, pounding away at the engineer of the watch, punishment for himself would be sure and swift. He took hold of Bucko Jernigan, shook and pounded at his head, turned salt water full in his face, made him swallow some of it, tossed him into the coal, picked him up and tossed him again; and gradually the other's resistance became more noticeable.

The oiler poked his head in the bunker. The bridge was calling again.

Big Tim heard, but engaged as he was with his mauling, he paid little heed till the oiler persisted in impressing upon him that the skipper was on the bridge, and it was he who wanted to speak with the first engineer. And finally Big Tim dropped

Jernigan; but, surprisingly, instead of remaining where he had been dropped, Jernigan, now conscious, struggled upright and plunged drunkenly for the bunker door through which hurried the water tender. And though Big Tim had reached the speaking tube in the engine room before Jernigan managed to get out of the bunker, Jernigan, his eyes wild, his course wavering, went stumbling after him, the eyes of the watch upon him; though those eyes registered neither fear nor laughter nor scorn. They were eyes that saw without manifesting judgment.

"Getting foggy up here," was the word from the bridge. "Stand by again for a slower speed. Everything all right down there, Mr. Jernigan?"

"Everything all right," replied Big Tim in mimicry of gruff Jernigan.

**J**ERNIGAN did not reach the engine room. Staggering as he was, he tripped over a scoop that protruded from the coal heap in front of No. 1 and went sprawling, cracking his head a sharp whack on a similarly protruding slice-bar handle. But that crack seemed to sober him with greater effect than all the mauling he had received, and he was picking his infuriated self up just as Big Tim returned from the engine room. They confronted one another, Jernigan shaking his head like a wounded bull, Big Tim braced as if awaiting an attack. The watch stood agape, the water level and steam pressure momentarily forgotten. There was an instant of tension, as though every one were frozen to the floorplates. But that tension was suddenly broken by the clang of the telegraph, demanding half ahead. Big Tim swerved and ran to reply to it; and, no sooner had he closed down on the throttle, than Jernigan, who had stumbled at his heels, reached a long arm about his neck—a surprisingly strong arm, considering his helplessness but a moment before—and yanked him away.

"Hands off!" roared this first assistant, his old domineering self once again; and, as though he had lost all sense of sane judgment, reached and opened the throttle again with an angry shove. The great engines complained noisily. The steam began to go down. Sykes, watching the water for Big Tim, ran for the feed pump. Jernigan, defending his throttle for the moment, seemingly protecting it from pro-



faning hands, glared wildly at every one in sight, giving never an eye to the various gauges which should have occupied him at such a time.

"You're nothin' but a water tender, McGeehan!" he roared. "Where d'ya get that stuff? Get the hell outta here!"

Big Tim glared at him.

"Stand clear!" he snapped, swaying on his toes. "That throttle's mine until you find your head. See?"

"The hell you say!" said Jernigan, slumping back against the telegraph dial. "The irons are what'll be yours for your guff. Get back in the fireroom, I tell you. What business you got in here? That ticket you're carryin' don't give you an engineer's authority on this ship. What're you lookin' for, a promotion? I'll give you one overboard, you——"

Big Tim's bonds of restraint seemed to fall from him. In that one instant he lost track of all theories in respect to a superior officer. He shoved Jernigan aside, and, just as the bridge speaking tube whistled shrilly, and the telegraph clanged, repeating half ahead, he closed down again on the throttle. He held Jernigan at arm's length, and bawled to the oiler to answer the whistle. The skipper was wanting to know what was wrong there below. Big Tim had the word passed that everything was all right, that the recent spurt of engine speed had been caused by a man stumbling against the throttle with the roll of the ship. Then he turned fiercely upon the first assistant engineer.

"You big porpoise! I even gotta lie to save your neck. When the skipper wants half ahead, he wants it, and not full ahead. Now keep your hands off."

Jernigan's fist came up and side-swiped Big Tim's jaw.

"Well, you——" thundered the big Irishman, and just as the ship heeled over to starboard, returned that attack with an uppercut to the engineer's heavy jaw.

Out in the fireroom, Fireman Sykes, who remembered a certain conversation preceding this watch, cursed with elation and craned his neck to see.

But, steaming as had been Big Tim's blow, it was not sufficient to fell Jernigan, and both sailed into each other, Big Tim yelling at Sykes to watch the water, and Jernigan spitting curses upon his adversary's head. Once Tim raised his glance out of the punching entanglement, and,

as if with fear that sight and sound of the fray might reach some one on top, with an added effort forced the struggle from the engine room, through the passageway between the two hot boilers, and into the security of the fireroom. There the two giants jabbed at each other's heads, and one jab more effective than others toppled them both into the coal pile, clinging to each other. Big Tim returned that toppling blow with a series of savage kidney punches which brought Jernigan to gripping at his throat. Then Tim managed to give a deft leg twist and transfer himself to the top of the skirmish, and thus to release himself from the gouging fingers and scramble to his feet.

"Fight with me, will you? I'll——" snarled the bucko engineer, coming up with an alertness that denied drunkenness in him now, and lunging forward with a straight-arm jab aimed directly between Big Tim's eyes.

**F**IRST ASSISTANT JERNIGAN knew vaguely—although he would never have admitted it—that he was getting a mauling long overdue. In response to his straight-arm jab, something with the force of a javelin struck him under the ear. Things were happening too fast for him to analyze the various stages of this go very thoroughly, but in the remoteness of his mind it occurred to him that Big Tim McGeehan was tearing into him now with punches not merely intended to promote safe-and-sane engineering during the twelve-to-four watch. Rather, it was with a fierceness that bespoke a long-desired retaliation and disregard for any and all shipboard conventions. Between well-aimed punches that rocked his head he saw a fighting Irishman backing up all the claims of his race; and, when once he was driven back under an attack of body blows against a hot fire door, he saw that same Irishman grinning—repaying for those unhappy hours spent under conditions of unfair domination. And although he, Bucko Jernigan, replied to every blow dealt him—for certainly he had a reputation for being no jack rabbit in a go of any kind—his end was the defensive. And somewhere in the background of his frequently buffeted head there leaped the memory of a certain capricious Liverpool lady.

"Steal my dame—will you? You big Irish—stiff!" he exploded in jerks. "I'll —" But just then a huge fist of the big Irish stiff cut off the threat with an exquisite uppercut. Down he went, and down came the Irishman on top of him. In the fall he cracked his head on the corrugated floorplates, but nothing so trivial, it seemed, could keep him down for the count. Nor could the up-shooting fist he drove into his assailant's midriff put that gentleman out. Both groggy they might be—for those others of the watch were so many hazy forms surrounding them, yelling at them, laying hands on them to separate them—but still they hammered away at each other, rolling, kneeling, wrestling in the coal pile. Gradually they worked their way to their feet, and there went into a clinch which immediately took the aspect of a football scrimmage as six other brawny members of the twelve to four piled on top of them and drove them to the bottom of a scrambling human heap. And, in a moment, that scrambling ceased under its own weight.

That is, it ceased inasmuch as the others of the watch piled off of Big Tim and Jernigan, who, sprawled on the floorplates, were locked fast at each other's throats.

"Let him go, Tim, for cripes' sake!" screamed Sykes—he who, before the watch, had encouraged such a fight. "The skipper wants Jernigan at the speakin' tube. You gonna fool around there all night?"

Six pairs of hands dove down to tear loose that double throat grip.

"Big Irish stiff—am I?" gasped Big Tim as he was dragged away, his eyes afire with savagery. And, with a wrench, he freed himself, tore in again at Jernigan, beating off the hands that held him. "Stand away, you guys, and——"

Jernigan came back at him and returned blow for blow. Neither could have been identified as civilized white men. Long since had their shirts been torn from their bodies; and those massive frames, wet, streaked with black, scratched and bleeding, stripped of all but dungarees and shoes, resembled nothing better than caricatured primitive men battling in the fire glow of infernal regions. And they both were savages who had forgotten every law of life but to match their physical supremacy one against the other. Neither seemed to have lost any weight of punch, but Jerni-

gan showed signs of weakening with loss of breath before the Irishman; and in that weak moment, Big Tim, with all his two-hundred-and-ten-pound force behind it, drove a right to the point of Jernigan's chin, and Jernigan crumpled.

But Big Tim had put so much effort behind that drive that he veritably pulled himself off his feet, and went diving head-first over crumpled Jernigan to butt his head against a hot fire door. Then he himself went down, but not for the proverbial count.

With the aid of his men, he was on his feet again.

"Answer the skipper at the speakin' tube!" Sykes yelled in his ear, and, half carrying, half dragging, he got Big Tim to the engine room.

But the skipper had already been answered by the oiler. Stand by for full ahead again was the word. When the telegraph clanged, Big Tim shook some of his wits together, and answered it.

So there he was, Big Tim McGeehan, water tender, handling the throttle, and out there in the fireroom lay the engineer he had knocked into insensibility. Luck had certainly smiled upon the twelve-to-four watch this night—if, indeed, the past three hours had warranted a smile—with the skipper and chief engineer still unaware of what had taken place. Through it all, Sykes had not lost the water, nor the firemen the steam. But, that the truth had not as yet reached the topside was, in no way, a guarantee that it would not when Bucko Jernigan again came to life.

But Big Tim was not immediately concerned with the future, as he stood by the throttle, trying to concentrate his gaze upon the board of various gauges. In fact, his head was yet as befogged as the surroundings were blurred to his sight. Something was turning over in his brain in synchronization with the engines of the *Kilmarnock*. Gradually his befuddlement cleared, but only to keener realization of the swift stiffening of his bruised and battered body. He thought of Jernigan, but did not move to look after him. Why had he bothered about him in the first place? he vaguely inquired of himself. Why had he not hung on to his water checks, and let the hard-boiled first assistant answer for himself? All in all, why hadn't he minded his own business? He knew what would come of not minding it—a water-tender's word

being of little weight against an engineer's. He'd be put in irons for insubordination, striking an officer, leaving his station, interfering with another man and his station, and, perhaps, for a dozen other counts of which he could not at the moment think.

Of a sudden, his faculties became aware of Jernigan coming through the passageway toward him—battered, bruised, and coal-streaked Jernigan, no sorrier looking than himself.

"Well, I'm a——" croaked the first assistant, clinging for a support to the doorway. "Are you back at that throttle? Where d'you think you fit, anyway?"

"Ah, go t' hell!" snarled Big Tim, and he turned his head away, ignoring the other. Jernigan staggered in and sat down on the bench.

"You're the toughest proposition I ever ran up against," he muttered out of his grogginess. "Maybe you think you're workin' yourself into a good job by handlin' that throttle when you're s'posed t' be swingin' on the checks. But, I guess you know I'm engineer o' the watch, don't you?"

Big Tim felt testily of his swollen starboard jaw.

"I guess I know you're a hell of a one, anyway," he said. "A guy don't need a ticket if all he's gotta know is what you do."

Jernigan leaned forward, his arms on his knees. He seemed unable to pull himself together. "Tell it t' your dame when you get back t' Liverpool," he mumbled.

"Come on, look alive!" retorted Tim. "I'm gettin' back in the fireroom."

Jernigan raised his head and got stiffly to his feet.

"Wait a minute," he said, adjusting himself to the lift and fall of the ship. "Don't run away, McGeehan. See here—you've run this whole damn watch, anyway; how about writin' up the log for me?"

"Is that a request or a demand?"

"I'm askin' you how about it, ain't I? What d'you want me t' do, beg you? You knocked me groggy like I am, didn't you?"

Big Tim, with much difficulty, turned to on the log.

"You're a big Irish stiff," broke in Jernigan in the midst of it. "I'll always hold to that. But I guess maybe you helped me out of a mess here to-night. And I'll reward you by not reportin' you to the chief for turnin' to on me."

Finished logging up, Big Tim threw down the pen.

"What do you want me t' do, thank you for bein' kind?" he scoffed. "Boloney! I don't confess t' bein' no good-Samaritan guy. I ain't tippin' my hat to you to get a drag. I took the throttle to keep the skipper and the chief from findin' you drunk, but also to save the ship from bumpin' into other ships in the fog. G'wan! Be kind to yourself. To me you're a heel."

Jernigan stood following with his glance as Big Tim shuffled out to the fireroom. There was no resentment in his eyes, but puzzlement of a sort. He shuffled out after him.

"You're still sore, eh?" he inquired.

"No, I ain't sore," growled Tim, looking up at the steam gauge. "I'm just tellin' you you can report me if you like, and if you don't like, then just lay offa me and this watch in the future. And you might try keepin' sober here below."

Jernigan fixed his eyes upon the big Irishman for a long moment. He seemed to be debating something in his mind. Finally he voiced it.

"You know, you give me a big pain," he said. Then he turned and shuffled off. From the passageway, he added, "I guess I'd better tell the chief what respect you have for an engineer officer."

A few minutes later the relief watch came down.

**A**T ten o'clock that morning the *Kilmarnock* slid into a berth in Lisbon to take on additional cargo for the States. At ten thirty, Chief Engineer Kunnert, pacing the boat deck with quick strides significant of an agitated mind, glanced at his watch and sent a seaman to rouse Water Tender McGeehan, who, as yet, had not made an appearance. In five minutes, Big Tim stood before him.

"Mr. Jernigan reported what occurred on the twelve-to-four watch last night," said Kunnert sternly. "What have you to say for yourself?"

"Not a thing, chief," replied Big Tim.

Kunnert drew his heavy brows down into a scowl as his eyes looked out from under them to regard the Irishman from head to toe.

"This is the eighteenth ship I've sailed on in my twenty-two years at sea," he said, "and I've never heard the equal to last

night's affair. Maybe I've been schooled wrongly, but I don't think I'd care to run up against many bruisers as tough as you and Jernigan. Holy smoke! Look at you! One black eye, your nose flattened out, one ear that's going to be cauliflowered, your jaw puffed out, your throat black and blue, one shoulder lower than the other—and your hands look like two raw beef-steaks. But, at that, you look better than Jernigan. He'll live, but his friends will never recognize him unless he improves. It's shameful, that's all. The entire engineering division of the *Kilmarnock* is disgraced. Both of you old-timers, too. I can't see how Jernigan had the nerve to admit such a thing could happen on his watch."

Big Tim listened, but as a man who cared little.

"You look very sick, and no doubt belong in bed," continued the chief. "But I've got to get you off my mind—put you where you belong. Come along to my cabin."

Big Tim McGeehan—and he was not even a water tender now; that fact was understandable—shuffled along at the chief's heels. His throbbing head was his first consideration in point of persecution, but an inkling of concern did filter through the bruises as to what his fate was to be. Nor did it seriously occur to him to lay the bare facts before discipline-exacting Chief Kunnert. A water tender could not assault a first assistant engineer; that law was inviolable. That he would be paid off and put on this Portuguese beach was the most lenient action against him he could hope for. But it would amount to more than that—Kunnert being scrupulously addicted to punishing severely any infraction of high-sea principles; that much more than a charge of mutiny might be placed against him, demanding imprisonment. But, to repeat, his aching head was Big Tim's most trying harassment.

Chief Kunnert waved him to a seat. From his desk he took some papers, and, looking over them, selected one or two from among them.

"I have here a record of you which you left in my safe keeping when you signed on here, McGeehan," he said. "A good record, and clean discharges, I'll admit that. But last night you risked all by wiping up the fireroom with the engineer of the watch. Why? Tell me your side of it."

Big Tim shrugged his heavy shoulders. The thought ran through his brain that the whole scrimmage of the night before had been more pleasurable than this grilling about it. He opened his mouth but shut it again and remained silent.

"You know you're guilty, is that it?" pursued Kunnert. "Remember, it's liable to go hard with you."

"I'm six foot, tough, and Irish," replied Tim. "I can stand it."

His glance roved about the bulkheads. He looked as though he wished the chief would do with him what he had to do and get it over with. But Kunnert swung his chair so that he almost sat knee to knee with him, regarded him keenly, reached a hand and placed it on Big Tim's arm.

"Not even sorry, are you?"

"Sorry I had a fight?" said Tim. "No. My name's McGeehan."

The chief laughed a little.

"You know," he said, his tone becoming confidential; "I wish I was like you in a way. I never had a fist fight in my life. I always talked myself in the clear. Some men are like that, some are like you—and, again, some are like Jernigan, talk and fight both. But I've an idea Jernigan's talk from now on will be less effective—coming from a bunker door. He came to me with his story of last night's twelve to four, and he certainly tried to incriminate you. But, before I charged down upon you, McGeehan, I sent for the rest of the watch, and got their side of the story. They told me the truth. So I took Jernigan to the skipper and demanded that he be paid off right here in Lisbon."

"But the skipper is against putting men on the beach in foreign ports. He thought a better way of punishing the scallywag would be to make him start all over again in his seafaring career. He tore up Jernigan's engineer's ticket, and ordered him to pass coal in the bunkers on the return trip to the States. Furthermore, Jernigan's confined right now in the bos'n's locker, to prevent his deserting."

Big Tim's battle-scarred features brightened almost imperceptibly. But a grin worked through, forced there by the friendly smile broadening the chief's sallow features.

"But his fall and disgrace leaves me without a first assistant," said Kunnert. "You've got a ticket. Take the throttle on the twelve to four after this."

# Coast of the Lost



## Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Arriving at Cooktown, Paul Owen gave Karin Hansen the locket her father gave him before he died on Woodlark Island. Since Paul was through with prospecting, he accepted a berth as mate in the schooner *Swift*, under command of Jake Lawn. She belonged to David Frazer, Karin's uncle and guardian. In her crew were Bicho, a renegade Frenchman, and Oliver Berry, Frazer's nephew. Paul joined her at Thursday Island, where Max Purvis was Frazer's agent.

After trading between New Guinea and the Solomons, Lawn held up a Japanese lugger in the China Straits. She had been pearling illegally, and Lawn collected several pearls from the Jap as blackmail. He forced Paul to take a hand in the proceedings, giving him a share of the pearls as a reward. The Japanese captain

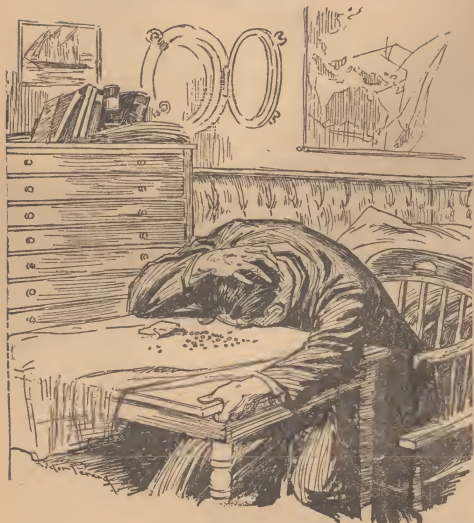
immediately went to Samarai and complained about Lawn. Purvis notified Frazer, who immediately came from Cooktown.

Purvis, believing that Paul was more seriously implicated than he seemed to be, discharged him. But the *Swift's* mate had no difficulty in proving that he had acted under pressure, and was reinstated in the employ as mate of the steamer *Nyra*, which was then en route from Sydney to Cooktown. Frazer was going to sail in the *Swift* to Port Moresby with Lawn.

"Do you think it's wise for Mr. Frazer to go on alone with Lawn?" Paul asked Purvis.

"David's quite able to take care of himself," Purvis replied. "The balloon don't go up till they get to Port Moresby, and Lawn won't have an inkling till he's haled into the presence of the lord high executioner."

## By Charles Rodda



That night the *Swift* sailed from Samarai with Port Moresby as her official destination. Paul watched her curve out and away from the coast of Papua like a driven ghost under the moon. A cloud crossed the moon, and the *Swift* was swallowed in the night.

### CHAPTER XI.

**T**HE *Swift* took a southwesterly course to clear South Cape and then held due west along the trailing peninsula of Papua. Before she was many hours at sea it began to blow. Clouds scudded between earth and moon, gathering threateningly.

Frazer went to his cabin. It had been

his delight to voyage in the *Swift* whenever opportunity permitted, and this was his old cabin, used by him when he had sailed the schooner himself, when she had carried the beginnings of Frazer & Co., lock, stock, and barrel.

When he went into the cabin he did an act that was purely mechanical. He fastened the door and unlocked a small black bag he had brought on board with him. He took a package from the bag, placed it in an iron safe that stood in one corner, locked the safe, and unfastened the door.

So far he had had scarcely any talk with

Jake Lawn. The skipper had greeted him more or less perfunctorily, claiming a certain familiarity to which Frazer admitted his right.

Then Lawn had started to complain with his usual truculence.

"Look here, Frazer! You send this fellow Owen along to me and make him mate, without so much as a by your leave. I made a protest to Purvis, but I accepted Owen. Now, as soon as he gets a bit useful, you whisk him away. You're on shore there, and I'm here. I'd have thought I might have been consulted at least."

"There wasn't time, Jake." Frazer's voice sounded tired. "I had a lot to do at the end, and I couldn't delay sailing for Port Moresby. I must catch the Burns Philip steamer back. I had to decide on somebody quickly for the *Nyra*. I didn't want to leave it to Purvis."

"That's right! Don't leave anything to Purvis. He's another messenger boy, isn't he?"

The skipper laughed, but he kept his slaty eyes intently on Frazer, staring as if to bring some higher power of vision into operation.

"You told me you didn't want to go to the *Nyra*!"

"I did!" said Lawn loudly. "I told you I wouldn't play second fiddle to any man. I'm not going back to steam to serve under any damn imbecile you care to put over me—not even till you can get rid of him. I don't have to learn the sea."

"There was no suggestion of that!"

"Just a little native caution, eh? Thought I might pile her up for you. Like I did my own schooner. Well, I'm content with the *Swift*. I'll run her as long as I want to. She's easy. And there's enough doing in this part of the world to suit me. So you let your Mr. Owen wear the gold braid. Make him commodore of your fleet, if you want to. I resign all claims to him."

Frazer pondered those words that first night out. It appeared to him that Lawn had thrown them at him as a challenge. But Captain Lawn was mistaken in one particular. He would run the *Swift* only so long as his masters wished it.


A plan of attack had been settled to the satisfaction of Purvis. When the schooner reached Port Moresby, Frazer was to bring up the complaint of the Japanese lugger and dismiss Lawn.

Frazer had insisted on the matter being

dealt with at the capital, and not at Samarai. He wanted to see a friend in official quarters, to have the thing dispatched quietly and effectively, so that the name of Frazer & Co. would be cleared of suspicion.

But David Frazer was not at all sure that he had been truthful to Purvis in giving his reasons. Always there had been another reason undisclosed. It was vague, hardly formed in his own mind. For months he had put aside tales and rumors of Lawn's doings. He had refused to listen, even to Purvis. There were more counts against Lawn than the affair of the *Yedo*, and, lying awake in his bunk, he went over them until his mind was weary.

He felt now that he could not wait till he got to Port Moresby. There was only one thing to do now—to charge Lawn right away, directly to his face, and find out what was at the bottom of it all. But that might be foolhardy. He was at sea, with Lawn in command of the *Swift*. Nothing for it but to wait.

 FRAZER was satisfied with this decision until he began to examine his impulses. On the face of it it was manifest that he still wanted to save Jake Lawn, that he recognized an ancient obligation, a sort of responsibility. But he would hold to his plan. It was prudent at least, although he had no fear that Lawn would ever offer him personal violence.

He slept at last, scarcely feeling the heave and pitch of the vessel. Jake Lawn was still on deck, sweating under his oilskins, his narrow-hipped, fighter's legs spread wide, yielding to the movement under them to preserve the rigid verticality of his torso. The vessel under him was a live thing, and he was part of her, at once a subject organism and the executive peak of her living force.

The sailor part of him was an automaton. All the time he looked with the eyes of the vessel's subject and thought the thoughts of her master. The man, Jake Lawn, was a separate being, unheeding the sea or the wind or the fork of lightning that ripped the darkness far ahead, far in the west, beyond the shifting liquid walls that hedged the schooner, seeming to cramp her and hold her.

He, the separate man, was thinking of David Frazer, always of Frazer and what his visit might portend. There was some-



thing wrong somewhere. He could read Frazer's mind in a way, and there was something on the man's mind. He had seemed to avoid Jake Lawn; then, in their talk, to evade him.

All night he was on the poop. At dawn there was a break, and the wind gradually dropped. A gray slaty dawn with omens of respite, but no promise of continued clemency. The wind fell in velocity, but it still came as the breath of a tremendous energy. It spun creamy manes for the sweeping squadrons of the sea.

Lawn went to the galley, and cursed the cook in Motuan and pidgin English because coffee was not ready for him. He stood over the trembling native while the drink was prepared, and he drank it down in great burning gulps, wiping his beard and mustache with violent strokes of one hand.

"Take coffee to Mr. Frazer!" he ordered, and strode back to the poop.

The wind got up again, widening the break in the steel-gray clouds. Away to the westward there was still evidence of thunder, but the climbing sun was unveiled. The morning must grow in gold and indigo. There would be peace, and perhaps a calm.

But Lawn remained on deck, withdrawn, meditating somberly on David Frazer and his mission. Thought had the persistence of a small gnawing animal. He waited till eight bells, when he gave over the charge to Bicho.

"Berry!" he called. "Tell Mr. Frazer I want to see him in my cabin."

Lawn went to his cabin, but not to rest. He stood for many minutes before the photograph that hung above the mahogany chest. He brought a bottle of whisky from a locker and took a drink. He sat down with bottle and glass on the table. Again he looked at the photograph and waited. The lids of his eyes drooped, but he shook off his tiredness.

An hour passed before Frazer came, with a pretense of casualness to mask the issue between them. "Well, Jake!" he exclaimed in greeting. "I heard you had a bad night. I thought I'd find you resting."

"Take a drink," invited Lawn, frowning. "Not at this hour, thanks. You go ahead, you've earned it."

"Have I? Well that's something I've earned."

The antagonism was too manifest to be ignored. "What's the matter with you?" asked Frazer.

"Nothing's the matter with me," growled Lawn. "It's you that's wrong, Frazer. You've shown it all over you, ever since you came on board. You never did have a poker face."

Lawn slammed his fist down on the table and jerked to his feet. "Out with it!" he commanded sharply, as though the other were some weak-willed subordinate. "What are you here for? What have you got against me? What have you heard?"

Frazer seemed to be coming back from far away to a mental realization of the present. It was as if an echo of Lawn's words slowly reached him. An angry light flashed in his eyes. He stood before Lawn, his arms pressed straight at his sides, his hands clenched, his graying head lifted.

"What do you mean by this hectoring?" he demanded. "You'll be good enough to remember, Captain Lawn, that I'm not one of your crew."

Words rushed from Lawn in retort. "You're my owner! Will that suit you? I don't forget that. But here, right now, we're man to man. I'm as good as I ever was twenty years ago, and you're no better. I ask you again, what are you here for?"

For one angry moment Frazer considered an evasive reply, and he decided not to make it. "Sit down!" he said.

Lawn did so, without abating his truculent air. Frazer took the chair opposite him and pressed one hand on the green baize of the table.

"I'm here," he began, "because I've occasion to go to Port Moresby——"

"That's a damn lie!" shouted Lawn, pushing his bearded face forward.

"Wait a minute! Wait! I've occasion to go to Port Moresby, and, when we get there, we part, Captain Lawn!"

The skipper laughed. "So we part, do we?" He snapped the challenge across the table. "Why?"

Frazer answered straightly. "Because I'm not going to have my flag dirtied by any raids on other lawbreakers!"

"By hell!" ejaculated Lawn. "So that fellow Owen was just your police spy after all—a filthy spy in your pay!"

"Mr. Owen is not responsible in any way for my information or my present pur-

pose. Complaint was made to Purvis at Thursday Island by Captain Mara of the lugger *Yedo*. He admits that he was pearl poaching. You stopped him off Normanby Island and threatened to take him into Samarai. But when he gave you four pearls, you let him proceed. It's no use your trying to deny it——"

"I don't deny it," said Lawn, as though this matter were of no consequence. "What else have you heard?"

"Many tales which I refused to believe. Some of them I don't believe now. But I've heard enough to be sure that we don't sail any farther together, Jake Lawn. I could send you to jail, if I wanted to."

"But you're too compassionate, aren't you?" said Lawn with a new fury. "You always were, weren't you? That's why you picked me up when I was broke two years ago—after eighteen or more years."

"I have no more to say to you!" Frazer spoke sternly.

"Haven't you?" shouted Lawn. "Well, I have, and you're going to hear the truth! You picked me up in your ecstasy of self-compassion. 'Poor devil!' you said to your conscience. 'I treated him a bit shabby twenty years ago, but I'll make it up to him. And he won't be in the way, now that Mary's dead!'"

He leaned across the table, his elbows crooked, his hands pressing on the baize. He flung out one arm behind him, pointing to the photograph.

"Look at her, David! I saw you looking when you came in here. Look at her again! Your beloved sister, Mary! I was too much of a rascal for her, wasn't I? In your judgment! It didn't matter that she wanted me, did it? Or that I wanted her more than a convert wants salvation! That's good, isn't it, David? Salvation! She'd have meant that to me!"

Frazer stared at the photograph of Karin's mother while the words of Lawn dimmed in his ears. "Keep on looking at her, thou man of righteousness!" sneered Lawn. "You frightened her against herself, didn't you? You repeated gutter lies against me."

"I told you I believed."

"That's fine, David! That's fine! You believed all the lies you could rake up! You had a scamp and a sinner like me to work on. Good material, eh? And you smashed her. You thought I never saw her again, but I did. She hated you be-

cause you destroyed her. That's why she ran away with Ole Hansen, the poor devil. And that smashed him, too!"

"It's not true," asserted Frazer. "I did my best for Hansen!"

"And for me! You gave me this job in the *Swift*, eighteen years after. It was what I wanted more than anything. It salved your conscience, and it gave me this nice clean thing to play with. There were lots of things I wanted to do yet, but you've called the game, and we might as well end it!"

He poured out whisky and drank.

"Well," he said, "what are you going to do now? I've admitted everything. I'll admit a lot more, if you like. Better ask your Mr. Owen about our last blackbirding expedition. There were quite a lot of natives killed. My first failure, David!" He drank again and leaned back in his chair.

"Well," he repeated, "what are you going to do?"

Frazer spoke in a hard dry voice. "I'm going to clean this vessel. I'm going to make her honorable and decent again. I'm going to see that you never get employment at the hands of an honest man in this part of the world. I'm going to break you, Lawn, for the things you've done."

Lawn got upon his feet. Laughter shook him.

"Human intentions, my dear David!" he said. "I've heard a lot of them expressed in my time. You'd do all this if you could. But you can't. I'm in command of the *Swift*. You're merely the owner. I've waited to get you, waited twenty years!"

"To-morrow we may reach Port Morseby," answered Frazer.

"To-morrow? Then eat, drink, and be merry—— You'll never see Port Morseby while I command this vessel!"

He walked through the cabin door without a look at Frazer. He went on deck and a glare of sunlight made him blink. "Get all sail on her!" he roared to Bicho.

When he went back to his cabin, Frazer was gone.

That afternoon, toward sunset, the *Swift* lay becalmed, moving only to a long lazy swell. It was an anticlimax to Jake Lawn who wanted the headlong drive, the swift ferocity of storms. He paced the deck and paused only to lift a suffering face to the skies. "Salvation!" he pleaded to himself, taking the word he had used to David Frazer.

With dawn, the opal dawn, the monsoon blew again, and the *Swift* surged forward. The breeze freshened, became strong, leaped to a gale and waned in strength. Squalls crossed the great wide Gulf. They caught the *Swift* with their furious gusts, whipping the straight tall masts of her till the cordage strained and hummed like plucked harp strings.

Night followed day, and day night, and still the *Swift* sped. And so on, day and night, across the great Gulf. Then, working to windward, Jake Lawn took the wheel himself. Into the yellow flood of river waters swam the *Swift*, and then she was brought about, as though she had gone far enough.

Lawn stared down at the surge of mud-died water. There was no salvation here, only indecision. So he ran before the wind, but in an hour cursed his crew and came about again.

Oliver Berry watched him, sometimes with fear, sometimes with tremendous thoughts. But he was only a boy, and Lawn was the master.

David Frazer spoke to the lascars and the Papuans. "I am the owner, I am your chief! That madman is my paid servant. Seize him and bind him and deliver him to me!"

But Lawn watched from the poop, and, when he slept, as he must from exhaustion, one of the crew watched for him, revolver in hand, ready to shoot at the first sign of mutiny.

The fifth day passed, and the sixth dawned. The sea was roofed over with a pallid shield that blazed with the diffused fires of the sun. The sea was a flat lake of glaring light. The *Swift* hung motionless and heavy like a dead planet in some vast system of light.

Jake Lawn's eyes were red and strained as he stared into space seeking an answer. What to do? What to do? If he had had a god he would have prayed.

## CHAPTER XII.

**T**HE *Dart*, carrying Paul and Max Purvis, made an easy run to Cooktown, using an auxiliary engine during the calm that followed the gale of the *Swift's* first night out from Samarai.

At the office of Frazer & Co., there was advice from Sydney that the *Nyra* had sailed some days ago, but, as she would

stop at two Queensland ports to discharge and take on cargo, Paul would yet have to wait nine or ten days for her coming.

Purvis had explained the cause of the vacancy he was required to fill. The first mate was remaining with the former owners, and was coming on as far as Cooktown only as a concession to Frazer.

"It places you in a hole with the *Swift*," Paul reminded him.

"That's David's lookout," answered Purvis, undisturbed. "He'll find a man for her. Anyway, I'm glad you're going to the *Nyra*. It means command for you, Paul, as soon as old Tilly's tricked out in his shore billet. How will that suit you?"

Paul nodded rather gravely. "A couple of days ago," he said, "you were ready to pitch me into jail for—well, for acting to the detriment of the owners."

The accusation was jocularly made, but it had a keen and troublesome point for Purvis. In a conflict of feeling he had been too ready to accept the implication that Paul had been culpably involved in the *Yedo* affair. He had come to believe in Paul's guilt. The frank surrender of the pearls had been unexpected. It brought up again that vague question of Karin and Paul to trouble him.

Paul, in their most intimate talks, never mentioned Karin. If Purvis happened to name her casually, Paul betrayed no interest in her. But when they had reached Cooktown he did ask if Miss Hansen was at home.

She was. She had returned from a holiday in Sydney soon after Purvis had departed for Samarai. Now they were both invited to dinner because she wanted the latest news of her uncle, whom she had not seen for a month.

Paul, at this second meeting, saw her with new vision. Or she was changed. Naturally she was changed. When he first came to this house with the high-pitched roof, she was grave and sad because of the news he had brought of Ole Hansen's death. Now in her brightness, in her quiet laughter, in the flow of young gaiety, she seemed more remote from him. He was not admitted to the laughing companionship she shared with Max Purvis. Paul was the stranger, the visitor. There was nothing unnatural to him in this. Rather was it natural, essential. But Purvis saw that she was half afraid of Paul Owen, or afraid of herself.

"I saw the *Nyra* in Sydney Harbor," she told them. "She's not the old tub you said she was, Max. She looks quite smart in her new paint. I'm so glad you're joining her, Mr. Owen. Captain Tilly is such a nice old man."

"But he's a woman hater!" put in Purvis. "It's well known about here that he's a woman hater."

"Well, the chief engineer isn't!" declared Karin. "Mr. Gianetti is quite the most handsome man I ever met, Max—not excepting you. He has wonderful brown Italian eyes——"

"And an oily complexion, and long black Italian hair," suggested Purvis.

"Nothing of the sort! Well, I mean his hair is black, of course. But's he's an Australian. He was born in Port Adelaide. Captain Tilly says he's the best chief he ever had, but they quarreled horribly at lunch."

"Interesting! What did they quarrel about?"

"Oh, politics or something. Mr. Gianetti had several cabinet ministers hanging at the yardarm before he was finished."

"Most appropriately nautical," murmured Max.

The talk went on, from the *Nyra* to Sydney and mutual acquaintances of Purvis and the girl, and it became more and more remote to Paul.

Afterward he tried to go back to his earlier vision of her, but the picture had faded because of the vividness of his new glimpse. He wanted to realize something composite, to find her as she was, but she eluded him.

It was not until the next day that he saw how completely she had now come to occupy his thoughts. It was as if by withdrawing, by becoming more remote, she had become the more compelling.

On this day the Burns Philip steamer came in from Port Moresby. Paul went to the wharf with Purvis to meet David Frazer. Frazer was not on board. Inquiries brought the information that the *Swift* had not reached Port Moresby up to sailing time.

Purvis hurried back to the office, but hurry did no good because he had to wait till the mails were sorted in the ordinary course. A messenger was kept at the post-office box with instructions to wait until the official letters from New Guinea were placed in it.

Presently he came running with two letters from the company's agent.

There was no news of the *Swift*. The agent briefly stated that she was one day overdue at time of writing, and then indulged in hopeful suppositions. There had been a gale, a calm had ensued. No doubt she would be in by nightfall, or perhaps to-morrow morning.

Purvis tossed the letter to Paul and waited for him to read it. Purvis stared, then looked away. They discussed those same, hopeful suppositions, but each knew that one thought was common to them both. In other circumstances they would have thought nothing of the news. A small mishap, a difficult wind—there were many rational explanations. But the unuttered name was cast between them—Jake Lawn.

The nearest point of communication was Thursday Island. Purvis telegraphed to Wade. All vessels were to be questioned about the *Swift*. The *Dart* was to start on an immediate search, covering the coast from Samarai to Port Moresby and beyond.

Next day they were more gravely anxious, though the absence of news might mean nothing. They kept their fears from Karin, Purvis explaining the failure of Frazer to arrive by saying that he had changed his mind and gone on to Daru in the *Swift*.

"But why hasn't he written to me, Max?" she asked.

Two days later a trading steamer came in from Port Moresby carrying a dispatch from the agent. There was still no news of the *Swift*, then four days overdue. The agent had asked the government steamer *Briton* to make a search on her voyage to Daru.

"There are her boats," said Purvis, commenting on this letter. "They might have reached somewhere by now!"

They had ceased to speculate. Purvis could only condemn himself for having allowed Frazer to sail in the *Swift*. "I might have known he'd go 'bull at a gate' for Lawn!" he complained bitterly.

In their increasing anxiety they came to one conviction, but this they did not state to one another. Something very terrible had happened on board the *Swift*. They dread the news that might arrive at any time.

But Karin, basing her fears on misad-

venture at sea, prayed for some word. David Frazer might yet be safe, suffering on some island or drifting with others in an open boat.

She could scarcely keep herself from the telephone. A dozen times she called up Max Purvis, but the mystery that surrounded the vanished schooner had not been lifted. She went down to the office and sat with Max in Frazer's room, straining to keep control, waiting for every telegram to be opened. Suddenly she would get up and go to the broad mantelpiece where the model of the *Swift* stood. She would finger the model, touching the taut shrouds, moving the main boom, the gaff.

The tension only increased as time passed. The face of Purvis showed the strain. "If only the blasted *Nyra* would arrive!" he cried. Enough vessels were already searching the coasts and reefs and islands from Samarai to Port Moresby. But Paul knew the same strain of enforced inactivity.

"Go to Karin!" said Purvis next day. "You might comfort her a bit! I'll blow up if she comes down here again. You can keep her at home, anyway!"

She saw him come in at the gate and ran down the garden to meet him. "There's news!" she exclaimed. "Paul, you've brought news!"

He took her hands, shaking his head. She drew back from him swiftly, but she let him stay. She asked him to come into the house, and as he entered he was thinking of the picture in Lawn's cabin, the picture that was so very like Karin herself. Then he saw a tinted photograph on the wall where the light fell. It was the woman of Jake Lawn's picture, but in a different pose, more conventional.

"Who is that?" he asked quickly. "Do you mind, Karin?"

He named her as he might have named the child of the miniature. She looked up and answered with an effort, in expressionless monotone.

"My mother," she said. "I am very like her—very like!"

He waited a long time before he spoke his next question. "Do you know Captain Lawn?"

"No," she answered. "No, I've never met him. The *Swift* doesn't come to Cooktown these days. And I haven't been here much myself. Uncle doesn't like the heat for me. I went to school in Sydney."

She was more composed than she had been. They spoke of Sydney, of her school days. Then suddenly she demanded that he should seek news.

On another day a message was flashed from Wade at Thursday Island:

*Briton* arrived from Daru with Lawn and Bicho only survivors *Swift*. More later.

They waited in the agony of certainty, waited for an hour. Then they had the brief particulars.

*Swift* sank after striking reef near Mayer Island. Lawn Bicho saved by sticking to ship. Others lost in panic attempt to get away boats in heavy sea and pitch dark. Boats overturned at once. Sea subsided with morning. Lawn Bicho launched remaining boat. *Swift* was breaking up fast, slid off and sank. Lawn Bicho sailing Cooktown *Sairam* to-day my urgent request.

"Come with me, Paul," said Purvis.

When they got to the house Purvis went in alone. Paul waited on the veranda, where he had waited one night, not so long ago, for the coming of Karin.

Presently Max Purvis stepped across the sill of the open French windows. He held the telegrams and his hand was shaking.

"Go in to her!" he commanded in a hard dry voice. "She's sitting there like stone. Dead! She won't believe it. For Heaven's sake go in to her!"

He went. He laid a hand on her shoulder. "Karin!"

She had not felt his touch, but she heard her name. "It's not true, Paul!" she cried. "It can't be, Paul! I want him to be alive, to live! It's not true that he's drowned. There's not a word about him. That's proof, isn't it?"

"Karin," he said. "My dear, my dear!"

### CHAPTER XIII.

**T**HE *Nyra* arrived, and twenty-four hours later the *Sairam* delivered its passengers at Cooktown. The first event brought the relief of activity to Paul after his days of futile waiting and nerve-racking anxiety.

He reported to Captain Tilly at the first possible moment and immediately took his place in the deck department. Paul had his duties, but they were mechanical to him, even after disuse. The clank of sling chains, the rattle of winches, the chaff-

*chaff-chaff* of engines that sounded with biting insistence, were all too familiar to distract him from his thoughts, so the measure of his mental relief was small.

He had little time to observe his new home. He saw that the *Nyra* looked fresh and shipshape. Her decks had been neat to the verge of fussiness before the hatches were removed, but as yet he had not time to give attention to detail.

He lunched with the chief engineer, Gianetti, and the second mate, Turnbull. Captain Tilly was ashore with Purvis. Gianetti had a dark, ponderous, handsomeness of face on a short, stocky body. Turnbull, quite the reverse, talked endlessly of the ship, of ports, of cargoes. He was a tall boyish Englishman of the blond type, with none of the reputed English reserve.

Paul's impressions were vague. Turnbull showed him everything. They discussed problems of stowage and inspected the holds. By the end of the afternoon the cargo for Cooktown was out, and they had begun to load.

They would not load at Thursday Island before they had voyaged in the Gulf of Papua on what might or might not be a forlorn search for survivors of the *Swift*. Turnbull knew nothing of that proposed alteration in the schedule, and Paul did not enlighten him. The new first mate, when he left the ship after sundown, had the assurance that the *Nyra* would be ready to sail at any time after noon next day.

He was with Karin in the evening. She met him with the strained composure she had maintained during the day. "There's no news," she said, "nothing."

That she would cleave to him now seemed the most natural thing to her. And he could not question or analyze. The tragedy pressed on them. Happiness would come, their own great happiness together, but the thread must yet spin on. It was enough for the time that he could bring her comfort.

Purvis came to the house later. He walked back to the town with Paul. "I've arranged for you and Captain Kelly to be at the office to-morrow morning," he said. "Lawn ought to land about ten."

But the *Sairam* did not appear in the bay before ten. Paul watched her coming and reported to Captain Tilly. They went ashore.

Jake Lawn arrived with Bicho following at his heels. They had been fitted out

with new clothes, but both had a forlorn, castaway air. In Bicho this was nothing new. In Lawn the change seemed almost in the nature of a dire personal catastrophe.

But now his neatness was gone, his personal dignity, too. The beard that had ever been trimmed to a neat point—the menacing, truculent beard—had grown ragged and was neglected. His hair sat untidily on his head. His big hands were unclean.

Slow replies came to the first swift questions of Purvis. Slowly Captain Lawn asserted his sure belief that David Frazer was dead. Drowned, there could be no doubt of it. Frazer had attempted to get away in the longboat, with others. The crew had fought in panic for places in the boat. It was swamped and smashed to pieces on the reef.

"And Oliver Berry?"

"The boy tried to stop the rush. He was swept from the deck by a sea that broke right over us."

"Yes, yes, yes!" put in Bicho excitedly from his chair against the wall. "I see M'sieu' Berry fighting with one of the lascars. Then the big wave come."

Lawn told his story of the wreck. The storm had come so suddenly the *Swift* was overwhelmed. It was one of a long succession of storms, and it had followed a calm. It blew the sails to shreds.

Captain Tilly leaned forward watching him, a mild-looking man with a red face and a shining bald head with little tufts of snow-white hair ranging up in spreading pads behind each ear.

"You mean to say the squall caught you unprepared?" he asked in a shrill, rising voice.

"Squall!" Lawn exclaimed. "That was only the beginning. It was a hurricane upon us out of nowhere. Of course I shortened sail. Who says I didn't shorten sail? What's the meaning of this, Purvis? Is my seamanship being called into question?"

He halted, consciously seeing Paul for the first time. And Paul, who was sitting back a little from the others, shook his head to correct that illusion of Lawn's. He could not deny him this sympathetic gesture in his present state. And Lawn believed him, realized that the question had not been asked.

"It's the noise in my head," he said,

and his voice dropped to a dead level again as he resumed his narrative.

He had run to the wheel himself. He had remained at the wheel with one of the Papuan boys throughout. He was responsible, and he alone—for everything. He had reduced sail as required. The foretop-sail had gone in the first squall. Then it blew, and blew through a night as black as the pit.

There was no warning of any reef, but you could hear nothing but the storm. The reef would ordinarily be submerged. They were lifted almost on top of it, and the schooner's brows were smashed to match-wood. She slid back astern with the next big sea, but her broken head held to the coral.

He could see the reef then as the sea subsided. But every wave submerged it and rammed the schooner back inch by inch to destruction. Bicho and Lawn decided to take to the one boat that the storm and crew had left them. As they pulled off they saw the schooner sink.

"You say the night was as black as the pit," observed Purvis. "Yet you saw the longboat swamped and smashed?"

"I did not see it," Lawn contradicted him. "There were moments when the night lightened a bit. Bicho saw the accident. He was at the side with his cat's eyes."

"Yes," agreed Bicho, who had been raptly following every word. "Cat's eyes! I see the boat touch water, and she turn completely upside down. Then she is lost—*perdu*!"

"Can you tell us where this reef is?" Purvis asked Lawn.

"It lies southeast by east from Daru, about thirteen miles nor'-nor'-east from Mayer Island."

"You had no idea of your position when you struck?" Captain Tilly narrowed his bulging little eyes.

"No."

"But you are very sure of it now?"

"We landed on Mayer Island," answered Lawn in his monotonous voice.

"You landed!" Purvis jerked up.

"We thought of making down toward Torres Strait," explained Lawn. "We saw the island and, thinking we must be near the pearly waters, we decided to land. When I got my latitude I knew it to be Mayer Island."

"But, man," exclaimed Purvis, "you

came on land so close and did not search it for survivors?"

"Mayer," said the skipper wearily, "is about seven acres of coco palm without a living soul on it. We went all over it thoroughly."

"You left Samarai for Port Moresby," Purvis continued. "You were wrecked off the western coast of the Gulf six or seven days later——"

"Six days," interrupted Lawn.

"How is it you did not put in to Port Moresby?"

"Mr. Frazer's object was to reach Port Moresby in time to take the Burns Philip steamer to Cooktown—after he had completed his business. The first day out from Samarai we were becalmed—for twelve hours or more. Then it blew, dead ahead. By the next morning there was no chance of connecting with that steamer. Frazer ordered me to take him to Daru."

Purvis ceased to listen. It was preposterous. Yet it was just the preposterous sort of thing that might be true. It was incredible only because of his dark suspicion of Lawn. Without that suspicion to throw a sinister light on everything, the argument was logical.

Suddenly Purvis had had enough of it. "Well," he said, "we'll have a look at this reef. The *Nyra* can take us before calling at Thursday Island. You'll come with us, Jake!"

Again life came into Lawn's eyes. "You'll look at the reef?" he exclaimed. "What for?"

"When Mr. Frazer left Samarai," went on Purvis, "he had with him a package of pearls. He would have locked them in the safe in his cabin. I'm going to get those pearls."

It was true. A valuable package of pearls, and uninsured, because Frazer had been so sure of himself. "I've got to get those pearls," Purvis added.

"You never will," asserted Jake Lawn. "The *Swift's* where no diver will ever reach her. There's a sheer drop from that reef. I know it."

"I'm going to see it," declared Purvis. "And you're coming to show me."

Jake Lawn was indifferent to anything that might happen to him now. He might rouse himself for a minute now and then, but his mind and spirit would slump back into that brooding contemplation of himself. For six days he had sailed with his



enemy delivered up to him. For six days and nights he had not known what to do.

"All right," Lawn said to Purvis. "I'll go with you. I'll take you to the reef."

Purvis turned to Tilly. "When can we sail?" he asked.

Captain Tilly calculated. "In two hours," he replied.

Purvis looked at his watch. It was twelve o'clock. He suggested that Lawn should go on board the *Nyra* with the others. Lawn agreed and insisted that Bicho should be taken along on the trip. It was plain that he had no liking for contact with Bicho, but he was afraid that the fellow would not know what to do if he were left behind.

"Have you got a job for him?" Purvis inquired of Tilly.

Paul reminded his new skipper that a fireman was wanted.

"That'll do," said Lawn, without consulting his companion, and Bicho went to the *Nyra* as a prospective stoker, following very humbly the great floundering bulk of Jake Lawn.

Purvis motored out to see Karin, to tell her the news.

"You must take me with you, Max," she pleaded. "I can't stay here."

"But it's not possible, my dear," he argued gently.

"I can't stay here—waiting," she repeated. "I'd just mope till I died, not knowing what you were finding." There was a luster in her eyes, a liveliness recovered. "Max, I believe he's alive. I don't believe he was drowned. He's waiting for us somewhere. Perhaps on that island. Don't you see I must go with you?"

He saw it. He was afraid to leave her behind. It would have to be arranged. No doubt it could be. He would get in touch with Captain Tilly at once.

**F**AR away, on the glistening blue blaze of Torres Strait, the lazy pearlers swung, sun-drenched. One lugger, detached and lonely, drew sluggishly in toward the port of Thursday Island. The Malay diver and his tender sat forward on the deck, ignoring the sun, talking together, quarreling.

A lanky Australian stretched his frame aft, holding the tiller with one bare foot. He took off his bell-shaped cork helmet and mopped his head with a red-and-white

handkerchief. He cursed the heat and settled the hat at a tilt so that the sweat-band seemed cooler.

His mate rose up from the cabin scuttle, came toward him.

"Well, how's he now?" asked the man at the tiller.

"Can't get a word out of him," said the other man. "He just goes on mumbling, and scarcely that at times. I had a look through his clobber. Thought I'd better. There's a post card from a girl, some Melbourne girl. Seems his name is Berry—Oliver Berry. And what do you make of this?"

He spread out a chart of the New Guinea coast. Northward, just above the wide, island-dotted mouth of the Fly River was a cross in pencil, and a line drawn from it sought the open space of the Gulf. The line ended in the word *Swift*.

"Looks as if he's from the missing Frazer schooner," drawled the helmsman. "With luck we'll get a bit of salvage on the boat."

"Poor little devil! He's only a boy!" The second man folded the chart thoughtfully.

"He'll soon be in the hospital, if this splendid one-knot gale holds!" The speaker shifted. The deck had grown hard even for his accustomed hip.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**B**EFORE he was picked up by the lugger—some time before, though he had lost all count of days—it seemed to Oliver Berry that his life was governed by mighty rhythmic waves beating him down into oblivion or sweeping him up to some crest of sentence.

It was a fact that he was alive. It was clear to him that he was lying on a swampy shore, and his clothes were steaming, drying, under the fierce morning sun. He had never seen this place before. He took it all in now before he became aware of his aching body.

There was the low stretch of dark-green swamp scrub, and farther inland the green plumes of nipa palm. The sea had become a vast, moving yellow flood. He saw a dark tree trunk pass him, borne on the current, outward. The first fact from the past registered in his mind as with an audible click. Struggling in the sea he had grasped a log.

Later he remembered that he had been swept overboard, and from this additional fact he came upon others. He had been in the schooner *Swift*. The captain's name was Lawn, and it had seemed that he was mad.

Yesterday, becalmed, they had waited for wind. He recalled the start of the vessel on the first puff, a mere capful blowing under the glaring metal roof of the world. They were then out in the Gulf, far out in the Gulf, becalmed.

The metal roof had cracked with the piercing flare of noonday lightning, which became more vivid as the sky darkened. Then the *Swift* was scudding before the wind—an easterly wind, when by all the laws it should have been from the west.

The fore-topsail had gone with a bang like a gun and a shivering, shattering, tearing sound. Then Lawn was at the wheel, shouting orders, putting her up head to wind. Reduce sail!

For some reason Lawn was next sailing her close-hauled, as though trying her out in that blow. Consideration of this behavior first gave Oliver Berry the notion that the skipper had gone mad, and he was confirmed in this notion when Mr. Frazer had tried to seize command.

"Now that was mutiny," said Berry out loud, as he stood alone on the shore and tried to get things straight. "Mutiny, according to the law."

Anyway, here he was, and he had to find out his position. The low swamp obscured his view, but there was a higher point with a tall tree about a mile along the shore of the yellow flood.

He limped stiffly toward a tree. As he climbed into it he first became conscious of an enormous pain in his head. In the tree he felt dizzy. He had to wait and rest until his eyes had cleared. Then he saw what looked like a white boat, one of the smaller boats of the schooner, caught in the swamp and rocking idly in a tree-locked cove.

Mechanically he climbed down and made his way to the boat. There were no skulls in the boat. He used a board from the stern sheets as a paddle and pushed off. From the tree he had noticed what appeared to be the end of the swamp, and he wanted to reach it, to stand on decent land again.

He had decided by now that he had been washed up on the western shore of the

Gulf at the mouth of some river which must be identified if possible. The current of mud-stained fresh water helped him on his present course, for there was a definite lateral swirl along the swamp. He used his improvised paddle to keep himself inshore, and he observed that but for the fortunate side swirl he must have been carried far out to sea.

Then he came to the end of the swamp and entered a small hidden bay. The bay itself was not extraordinary, but the sight within it made him gasp with astonishment. Screened from the open Gulf by a jungly promontory, her bows smashed and caught on a rocky shelf, lay the schooner *Swift*.

He paddled alongside and secured his boat. He climbed on board and stared along the wreckage-littered deck, at the torn, dangling canvas, at the great broken curtain of the mainsail, at the outreaching boom swinging slowly and ever so little as the swell lifted the hull, a mere pole now with sad streamers of torn canvas dragging in the water.

The gap in his story was bridged. He saw again the mad flight through the night, the *Swift* racing like an insane thing before the wind, the skipper at the wheel, with the devil Bicho attending him. Then the mainsail went. Oliver Berry, clinging to handhold for dear life, knew, by some supernatural instinct, that it was going. It burst with the thunder of artillery. It tore from the boom and carried against the shrouds, and roared in its agony. The gaff must have been a sword of destruction aloft. The sickening lurch all but hurled Berry from the deck—prematurely.

Lawn roared in his demoniac fury, but the crew in panic dashed for one of the boats. That was when Berry came into it. He saw that the boat could not live. The seas were pounding the heeling schooner and breaking over her. He struggled with one sailor. Then came the sea that swept him away, mercifully.

It occurred to him that it was time to find his position on the terrestrial globe. He looked at the sun. He went to see if the chronometer was all right. He found from the pointer that it would soon run down. Carefully he wound it.

Next he found a sextant, and was too comfortably busy to attend to the hunger that had attacked him. Not until he had

carefully noted on a chart what he took to be the *Swift's* position, did he go in search of food.

There were a number of cabins, for the *Swift* had carried passengers on occasions. Most of them were used as storerooms of one kind or another. Berry opened no doors, except that he went to his own cabin to get his things.

In a matter-of-fact way he loaded his boat with his personal possessions and a store of food and water. Going through the galley he noticed that a fire was dying in the stove. There was warm tea in a teapot, and he pondered on this for a while. Some one, he decided, must have been in the vessel that morning, so there were other survivors.

He was the more eager to get away. He might even come up with the others, for they would surely make for Daru. His chart showed him that the wreck lay just north of the Fly River, whose widely gaping island-dotted mouth was the great barrier between him and civilization.

Getting a lot of satisfaction out of his own capacity and thoroughness, he worked steadily at his boat, preparing her for the voyage. He found a spar and trimmed it with a tomahawk. He stepped it and lashed it and had a mast. From a piece of mainsail he contrived a sort of dipping lug. He discovered a pair of oars, and he believed then that he was ready to set out.

Under the burning sun he shivered with cold. His head was hot and throbbing. Fever! The word transmitted alarms. He stood for a moment in physical misery, trembling. Then he shook off the fit and went in search of quinine.

The small medicine chest was gone from its place. Berry looked toward the captain's cabin. The door was open. He entered. There was no medicine chest. The cabin seemed to be much as usual, except that a picture of some woman that used to hang above the mahogany chest was missing.

Swiftly, like a great wave, the realization of his solitude engulfed him. It was simply an appalling distance to Melbourne and Brighton Beach—and here he was, reduced to an infinitesimal human dot in the center of a vast loneliness. He was frightened.

Nevertheless he went on looking for quinine, automatically.

There was none in the cabin that he

could find. He paused to consider. Paul Owen was gone. But anyway he had depended on the ship's medicine chest. None of the others would have any. Of course, there might be some in Mr. Frazer's cabin.

The door was shut, and, as he touched the knob to open it, an unaccountable dread struck into him. He had been frightened before, because of his utter loneliness, but this dread was different, proceeding from something external to himself, as if it leaped to him in a penetrating current from the knob of the door.

He turned the handle. The first thing he saw was a pistol on the mat. Then he lifted his eyes, and all his boyish valor was gone from him. He screamed, as he afterward confessed. Screamed like a fourteen-year-old girl.

After he screamed, he stood there rigid in the opening, leaning forward, holding on to the doorknob for support. Stretched head and shoulders across the cabin table and face down lay David Frazer. He had fallen into a chair, and sat with one leg sprawled out, the other braced against a chair leg. The hand of one outstretched arm gripped the table edge, the other was crooked about his gray head with fingers spread out.

The fingers of that hand were white, except where they were red. The red was blood, and the baize of the table cover had absorbed a dark flow. Thrown down on the table were pearls. There was a group of them that seemed to cohere, luminous in their white, nacreous sheen.

Oliver Berry slammed the cabin door and fled. He came out into the sun glare, ran across the deck, dropped into his boat, and shoved off. But dizziness and his throbbing head defeated him when he tried to move forward to get to his sail. He crumpled up in the stern sheets and lay motionless. The small boat spun and turned and was swept into the broad moving flood of the river that had come down to the sea.

From the hospital records and other interesting data relating to his experience, he afterward calculated that nine days elapsed before he was picked up by a pearling lugger in Torres Strait. He was never able to work out a satisfactory chronology. They remained for him nine days when he was out of touch.

Three days of the nine he spent on an

island. He waited in the hope that a sail might pass. At first he feared natives, then the horror of an uncanny stillness affected him. No sail came that way.

He started off on his voyage again, hoping that chance would bring him into contact with man. He had a pocket compass and with the help of this he steered south. His main concern was whether or not he had drifted through Torres Strait in some dead period, but this he thought was unlikely. If he had, then he must come sooner or later on the shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The pearlers found him, drifting unconscious.

## CHAPTER XV.

**M**AX PURVIS had a little more than an hour left to get through what looked like a week's work. He attacked letters and documents savagely. He would do what he could and leave the rest. Wittell, the head clerk, had full authority and would have to exercise it in the emergency. The most important thing in the affairs of Frazer & Co., just now, was to get the *Nyra* to Mayer Island.

Most of the hour was gone when Wittell came in from the outer office. He was in so much of a hurry that he forgot to tap at the door. Purvis looked up.

"I can't take anything more, Wittell," he said sharply. "Deal with it yourself! Don't you know I've only got a few minutes!"

Then he saw that Wittell was gaping at him, moving his mouth in a vain attempt to articulate something. The head clerk stuttered in moments of excitement. Now he was actually shaking with emotion, holding out a fluttering telegraph form.

"J-just come!" he got out at last. "From W-Wade. Thursday Island!"

Purvis, pressing on the desk with his hands, lifted himself and took the telegram. "Oliver Berry picked up by pearl lugger," he read. "In hospital, unconscious. Found in open boat. Carried chart in pocket giving position *Swift* northern shore Fly River mouth opposite Dibiri Island. This fails to check Lawn story. Berry bad way, delirious. Keeps shouting name Mr. Frazer. Any instructions? Wade."

Purvis stared at the slip of paper. He put it on the desk and hammered it with

his fist. The quick flood of relief that leaped in him brought a nervous reaction. He thumped the telegram with his fist and laughed.

"Fails to check Lawn's story, does it!" he shouted at the still trembling Wittell. "Fails by a hundred and fifty miles, if I know where Mayer Island is. Send a wire to Wade; tell him to do all possible for Berry. Say the *Nyra* is sailing at once to investigate. And keep your mouth shut about this, Wittell! Not a word to a soul!"

Purvis did no more work. He kept on rereading the telegram and poring over a large-scale official map of Papua. He thought of sending an urgent request to Wade for the position of the *Swift* in figures, but figures could add nothing to the information already given.

It was clear enough, and there was the map to show him the situation. The schooner was there on that river coast, somewhere between the Fly and the Dibiri, in one of those tortuous inlets. Only Berry himself could give any further help.

The matter was urgent, most urgent. As Purvis interpreted it, the insistence of the delirious boy on the name of David Frazer meant that Frazer was alive and needing succor. Alive, and left on the wrecked schooner!

Karin came to the office.

"Did you fix it up for me to go with you?" she asked. "I've brought my things!"

He had not had time to see Captain Tilly, but, in his change of mood, he was confident it would be all right. Karin *must* go with them; some arrangement should be made. But all that was a small matter compared to his news and its significance. He showed her the telegram.

She had not been without hope, but now her hope had so much to support it that she could look at him smiling.

"Max, I told you," she said. "I had a feeling that it was all right." But she was troubled again. "Only—how is it—how is it Captain Lawn says she went down off Mayer Island?"

What he knew of Captain Lawn he would not tell her, although his own alarm had been quieted. Somehow David had beaten Lawn, but that story must be left to David.

"Come on," he bade her. "We've just got time. We don't want to hold up the *Nyra*."

Captain Tilly was not pleased to see Karin. Her appearance as a prospective passenger, further confounded an arrangement of accommodations already complicated by the necessity of carrying Purvis and Jake Lawn. But, notwithstanding his reputation as a misogynist, the Old Man had a certain innate gallantry, and he could appreciate Karin's anxiety.

The matter was fixed. Paul gave up his cabin and took Turnbull's couch. Gianetti would have slept in the stokehole to oblige almost any day, but he was merely asked to double with his second officer until Thursday Island should be reached.

This disposed of, there was a more important conference. Purvis was concerned whether it would not be advisable to make all speed for Thursday Island to see if more information could be obtained from Oliver Berry, but Captain Tilly advised that the Fly River should be their first objective. He was inclined to think that time might be the very essence of the problem.

"What I can't understand," he asserted, "is why Mr. Frazer did not go with Berry in the boat. Doesn't that strike you as peculiar?"

It struck Purvis then and there as so peculiar that the hopes aroused by the message lost some of their brightness. It was a riddle that had not occurred to him. He looked around quickly, fearing that Karin might have heard Tilly's words with a new dismay, but she had gone to take possession of her cabin.

Paul spoke.

"It seems to me that Berry would have set out with the intention of reaching Daru. That's the logical thing, and the boy's nothing if not logical. Then there was no reason for Frazer to remain on board."

Purvis tried to find an answer.

"That argument cuts both ways," he declared. "If the distance to Daru is so short, Berry might have gone alone to bring help. David may have been ill, or determined to look after the schooner. It's like him. He wouldn't leave the vessel if he could help it."

"Well, we must find the schooner!" Captain Tilly was magisterial. "The boy didn't reach Daru. He collapsed before he had gone far, and lost his way. That's the only explanation for his turning up all these days later."

"You're right," agreed Purvis. "We don't want to lose time."

Getting away became an urgent matter. Captain Tilly climbed to the bridge. A moment later the siren sounded a hoarse note. Meditating the disturbing questions just propounded, Purvis walked forward of the bridge deck.

The second mate, Turnbull, was taking a look at the tarpaulins on No. 1 hatch. He hurried away on his inspection. Some of the hands were waiting near their quarters. Bicho lounged by the fore-castle door staring at the funnel—a furlorn Bicho already grimy with coal dust.

Then hurrying, plunging on board in a desperation of physical movement, came a figure familiar to Purvis. He recognized the reporter who had called at his office, a keen-looking, pale-faced youngster. The reporter ran straight up to him.

"Oh, Mr. Purvis!" he exclaimed. "I've been trying to find you for an hour. We've just had news from Thursday Island. Can you make a statement?"

"What about?" asked Purvis.

"Why, about the *Swift*! This new business——"

"We're sailing in less than a minute. You've just time to get off."

"Yes, but look here, I've got to see Captain Lawn and this Mr. Bicho, the bos'n!"

Over the round shoulders of the reporter Purvis saw Bicho slope forward a little, hearing his name. Purvis was angry. What business had this fellow following him up, climbing on board after him with his demands for statements? But Purvis was really angry because he could not conjecture how little or how much the reporter knew. If the story of Berry's chart got out there would be at least a mild sensation—perhaps a major one. The mystery mongers would be on the scent.

"You've no right on board this ship!" snapped Purvis, looking down at the intruder. "Get off!"

"But, Mr. Purvis! I mean to say I'm representing my paper. I just wanted to ask you one or two questions, if you'd be so good——"

The note of the siren smothered a more heated reply by Purvis. Sound went moaning out over the bay. And on the tail of it came urgent words, thrown over the reporter's shoulder as he turned to look to his retreat. Just three words reached

Purvis. The end of some sentence of inquiry.

"—about Oliver Berry!"

"Get off this ship before I throw you off!" roared Purvis.

The indignant news gatherer, his pale face becoming a red flare, turned. "You can't talk to me like that!" He protested shrilly. "You can't——"

Purvis took two steps forward, but it was the significance of movements by others on deck that alarmed the youngster. He had no desire to be carried away from the port. Whatever story there might be in it, he was definitely not of the seagoing kind. He decided that the dignity of the press could wait. He fled.

The incident seemed of no consequence to Purvis. Before the *Nyra* was fairly under way, he was regretting that he had lost his temper. He might have used some civility in handling the fellow, but his nerves had been more than a little frayed by the strain of the past days.

It was time to relax, and, with a conscientious effort, he did relax. He gazed back almost calmly toward Cooktown as the steamer moved out and turned up the inner sea in the direction of Cape Bedford.

Cooktown itself was a monument to the hazards of the sea safely endured. The Endeavour River had given harborage to the first bark to explore this coast and run the gantlet of shoal and reefs within the great barrier that walled the Coral Sea.

Purvis had a historical mind. He could imagine very vividly the plight of Captain Cook and his company when the *Endeavour* gashed her planks on a reef and came leaking to that harbor, preserved only by a fragment of rock that had lodged firmly in the hole.

It was one of the marvels that offset the hazards, and another marvel had brought back Oliver Berry to tell of the *Swift*. Purvis, like the reporter, preferred the shore end of a shipping job, but he had no uneasiness about the *Nyra*. She was secure. He saw something of the methodical conduct of life on board, saw the change in the mild-mannered Captain Tilly, now the master whose word was law.

Here Captain Tilly was not to be challenged, but in the end he was responsible to Frazer & Co. Purvis had scarcely had time to appreciate the fact that this ship

belonged to the company. To this considerable height had David Frazer built up his small affairs, and it would be irony too bitter if he were never to board the *Nyra* as owner.

With these thoughts Purvis put the reporter out of his mind, but at dinner that night it suddenly occurred to him as an alarming possibility that Bicho might have overheard their talk. If so, the name of Oliver Berry might have suggested to the Frenchman that another survivor from the *Swift* might have reached civilization.

He said nothing to the others. He did not wish to disturb Karin, who was talking with something of her old spirit to Captain Tilly and Paul. Jake Lawn had not come to the dining saloon. He had asked to be served in his room, where he had remained throughout the afternoon.

Purvis hoped the man would remain in seclusion throughout the voyage. His own antipathy to Lawn had become almost violent. Now that the fellow was so definitely suspect in this mystery of the schooner, Karin dreaded a meeting with him. That meeting was inevitable, Purvis supposed, but the longer it was delayed the better.

After dinner Purvis was left alone to worry over Bicho, but in the end he decided there was nothing to get excited about. Lawn and Bicho were on board, trapped. Beyond all question they would soon discover that the destination of the *Nyra* was not Mayer Island or the reef that was supposed to have ended the *Swift*.

Any warning was now too late. They would have to remain on board until they came to Thursday Island, unless, in their extremity, they elected to take to the shore when the Fly River was reached. And if they did that, Purvis would not greatly care, for they would, in effect, be signing their own death warrants to venture alone in the territory of the wild and untamed cannibals.

But this was another point he had forgotten in the rush since Wade's telegram had reached him—the part the savage tribes might play or might have played in the whole adventure. He preferred not to think of it, preferred to cling to his hope. The *Swift* might remain hidden from the natives forever on that coast of swamps and twisting inlets. It was a different thing if men took to the shore with the object of penetrating inland and even-

tually making their way to some outpost whence they might escape.

"Damn the reporter!" said Purvis to himself, and with that he dismissed the whole incident and lit a cigar. Neither Bicho nor Lawn could do anything to avert what lay ahead. Moreover, Purvis was positive that Bicho had not heard the mention of Oliver Berry.

Purvis puffed comfortably, satisfied with his two conclusions. Had he communicated them to Paul Owen he might have been persuaded that the first was too easily, even innocently, reached. The second must have been accepted. It was, nevertheless, erroneous.

Bicho had overheard the whole conversation, and had thought of nothing else ever since. He had almost followed the reporter from the deck, realizing that that way lay liberty. He stayed because he remained true to the instincts of the faithful dog.

Lawn despised him, would kick him from pillar to post, yet Lawn was the master, the hand that fed. Obedience and fidelity had become reflex actions in Bicho. He would not desert.

What mind was left to him worked with the certain logic of his race. "What's this about Oliver Berry?" Thus he filled in the reporter's question. So some news had come through about Oliver Berry. Since a corpse would scarcely reach port, the boy must be alive.

Bicho had seen him washed overboard. There was no doubt of that. Not many minutes later, the seas had hurled them past the promontory to crash upon the rocks in that hidden inlet.

Lawn had argued that the crew had been drowned. Any that might have got ashore would not be heard of again. They would never find the schooner, never live to escape the cannibals. No one would ever find the schooner, unless the very inlet where it lay was explored. It was invisible from the sea. That Bicho knew from the evidence of his own eyes. Ships might pass up and down that coast and the wreck remain hidden, unless they knew where to look for it.

But supposing the boy Berry had got ashore, and, by one of those queer miracles of the sea, had found the schooner? Not such a miracle after all, Bicho decided. That devil Oliver Berry would find anything anywhere, name of a name! He

had come back with the true story of the *Swift* and the thing it contained.

The thing it contained! Bicho crossed himself. That, too, was a reflex action.

He thought he should see Lawn at once. But first he must go on duty for these pigs. He went down into the sweating stoke-hole to shovel coal onto the fires, because it was the will of Jake Lawn.

Bicho did not sleep when he came exhausted from the stokehole. He sat with his scarred face resting in the cradle of his clenched hands, thinking. All night he was thinking.

Next day he went to the officers' quarters. The steward, doing the rooms, showed him the door of Lawn's cabin. The steward had a romantic feeling for wrecked mariners. Poor devil of a castaway, he thought.

Bicho knocked at the door, but got no answer. His mission had become urgent, he turned the handle and entered. When he saw Lawn he closed the door behind him, carefully. He stood waiting for some sign of recognition, some sharp reproof that must be taken before he could speak.

Captain Lawn, clad in striped and wrinkled pajamas, sat in a chair. His body was slumped forward. He rested his forearms heavily on his widespread knees. His head hung drunkenly, his ragged beard pressing against a great chest bared by his unbuttoned coat. A glass was grasped in one hand, empty.

Bicho began to speak, but was unheard. Captain Lawn was lost, wandering where there was nothing more palpable than the shades that filled his mind, the torturers in his private hell. He had been trying to make his peace with Mary Frazer, but it was a peace that could not be made.

He had lied to David Frazer in the cabin of the *Swift*. Mary had had no hatred for her brother. Perhaps he had lied to himself. All thought and action had been informed by his own hatred. If he had gone away, gone to another part of the world, she might have been happy with Ole Hansen, to whom she had borne a child.

But the great Captain Lawn had seen himself the controller of destiny, the dispenser of punishment. With growing violence he had brought his hatred against Frazer and Ole Hansen and the daughter he had never seen, the girl they called Karin. Frazer had been removed from his

judgment, Ole Hansen was buried on Woodlark Island, the girl Karin——

Bicho went on talking, patiently. Lawn caught a name. Oliver Berry! Slowly he began to understand. Oliver Berry had survived, had come back with some tale.

Captain Lawn lifted his head and stared at Bicho. "Well," he said quietly, "it's you who'll be hanged, isn't it? What's it to do with me? Can't you leave me alone?"

"But, *mon capitaine*, we must do something. They will find the *Swift* and then we'll——"

"And then you will hang!"

Bicho was sweating in his anxiety. The fires of the stokehole were nothing to the fires of his fear. He argued.

"Get out!" commanded Lawn, with a sudden angry movement of his body in the chair.

Bicho became ingratiating, fawning. With a nervous movement he laid a hand on Lawn's shoulder. The master had to be roused, brought out of this stupor of drink. It was no time for drink when they were drawing ever nearer to the peril.

For a half minute of silence Lawn gazed at the hand on his shoulder. Then, with no more warning than the movement, he lurched to his feet and seized Bicho by the body.

He lifted the Frenchman as though he had been a doll. He threw him on the bunk, and his fingers closed about his throat, feeling for the windpipe. Bicho uttered one rasping cry, and there was then no sound but the beating of the engines as Lawn tightened his strangling grip.

Bicho's jet eyes had a dead, unseeing glare. The yellow skin of his face took on a darkness of hue. The line of the knife slash down his left cheek from the corner of the eye almost to the jawbone was a livid furrow.

"Eh!" Lawn whispered. "Eh, Bicho! Have you made *your* peace? Shall I end you now? Or do you want to go back to the *Swift* to pick up the pearls?"

Back to the *Swift*! Lawn's grip relaxed. He lurched across the floor and threw open the door. He lifted Bicho from the bunk and pitched him out into the alleyway. Then he peered, leaning forward, hands pressed against the jambs. The startled steward confronted him.

Lawn roared at the steward.

"If that swine comes crawling round here again, kick him out of it! He's got

no call to be in the officers' quarters. Kick him into the hole where he belongs."

The door was slammed shut.

Bicho was writhing in the alleyway, gasping for breath. But he went before the steward could bring him a drink——went groping along with bent body and arms outstretched like a blind man in a fury.

Afterward he thought it over with the fixed philosophy of the under dog. The master was sick with the drink, sick in his mind. He had been like that many times on the *Swift*. He could not listen to wisdom or even see the danger ahead. So Bicho himself must act for both.

It was simple, so far as the devil's thought and animal capacity of Bicho went. He saw it all clearly in the blinding glare of the furnaces below, saw it as he heaved with his shovel and banged the door and stood with his moist sweat rag, mopping.

If something happened to this accursed ship, she would not venture into the Gulf. She would creep with her damage into the nearest port, and then Bicho and Jake Lawn would escape.

And Bicho took an engine-room view of things. When he had climbed, in due course, to air and rest, he went cautiously to the fiddley and surveyed the great square well where Gianetti was lord, the well that contained the heart of the ship, the great iron heart that pumped the life into her.

Bicho looked down from the fiddley and saw dark curves and the white shining rods of steel, the flash of brass. Lights were dull and yellow in a haze that seemed to shimmer to the steady throb.

But Bicho could see clearly every detail in his mind's eye. He had served in the engine rooms of his country's merchant marine. He had been second engineer in a Dutch cargo liner, before his unfortunate voyage to New Caledonia.

Bicho, meditating, asked himself a question. Supposing the guide bracket carried away and bent the low-pressure valve spindle?

## CHAPTER XVI.

**P**AUL was taking the eight-to-twelve watch. Captain Tilly was in the chart room. Turnbull seemed a bit restive. "The Old Man's fidgety," he said. "Scenting one of his circular storms. If it don't come off, he'll be peevish for a week. He's got the light of battle in his eye."



The breeze of their passage was not enough to relieve the sultriness. Evening had brought no change from the heavy weight of heat that the day had piled on. The ship was rolling badly. There was no wind.

"Looks as if I'm going to lose some of my beauty sleep," added Turnbull. "I'll turn in, anyway. May need the rest. If I'm called, ask them to be tender. You've nothing to trouble you for the present. Everything's been battened down."

The second mate steadied himself against a lurch and dropped quickly down the port ladder.

It was still light, with a diffusion of dull gold in the air, deepening. A metallic sort of gold. Paul gazed ahead. The shadow of something gathering below that horizon was in the sky. The sea had an oily opacity as if a painted canvas sheath had been drawn across it, a sheath that was lifted and molded by the slow swell, but never stretched, never broken. It was like a stage sea with motion imparted to it by some mechanical contrivance.

The ship had begun to roll some time ago. The motion was slowly getting worse, very slowly, though there was no perceptible acceleration of the swell. Once, she dipped into it and shipped some water over the bows. The spray hung in the air a moment, dead white against the darkening sea.

Paul went into the wheelhouse, assured himself that everything was all right, and returned to the bridge. In any confined space the atmosphere was not to be endured if you could get out of it.

Captain Tilly came from the chart room and held himself against the rail. "I don't like the look of it, Mr. Owen," he said. "The barometer's very unsteady. The monsoon isn't behaving as it should. There's every suggestion of weather."

Paul could do nothing but agree. The stars were coming out, clear overhead, but veiled by a haze on the horizon.

Captain Tilly's red face was an appreciable degree ruddier with the heat. His cap, cast back a little, cut the snowy patches of his hair on an oblique line.

"I had hoped for fair weather all the way," he went on. "I don't like to think of being delayed. I haven't said much to Mr. Purvis. It's right for him to be optimistic, but I'm very much afraid— You understand, Mr. Owen?"

"Yes, sir! I scarcely care to think myself. It will be very terrible for Miss Hansen if we're too late. It's hard to think why Mr. Frazer let Berry go off in that boat alone."

"Well, we must do our best. We can't afford to lose a minute. If there's anything ahead, we're going through it. It looks like a hurricane to me!"

Paul watched Captain Tilly's spare frame as he walked off. He smiled to himself, though rather gravely. Turnbull had informed him about the Old Man's weakness. He was a regular witch doctor when it came to hurricanes, said Turnbull. He made a hobby of circular storms. Collected material about them. He was going to write a book about them when he retired or got his shore job.

"You know the sort of book," explained Turnbull. "Two volumes, with a lot of those rummy meterological plans! Heaven help the sailors!"

Good lad, Turnbull, but decidedly talkative. Paul walked to the wheelhouse, and back along the wing of the bridge. It seemed to him, after an hour, that the murk ahead was gathering, reaching up to dim the stars. And the swell was getting up, too, to judge by the motion of the vessel. Running more swiftly.

A storm would mean delay. That was the wholly bothersome part of it. He hoped Karin would be all right.

Captain Tilly came up for another look at the barometer.

Mr. Gianetti had climbed down to his domain and glanced about him with the passionate pride of a temperament not wholly naturalized, though he was an Australian born.

"She's playing pitch and toss, all right," he observed to his second. "Ugly swell. Not a breath blowing, either!"

The second engineer shrugged his shoulders. He was not a voluble man. The shrug implied that everything was all that could be expected in the filthy circumstances, and what more could one ask for?

Gianetti prowled, lingering tenderly at times.

In the stokehole Bicho gave his thin body ungrudgingly to the labor. He, too, had marked the signs, but he had been through many storms in his time. They should never be permitted to interfere with the plans of men. They came up,

they died away. They were swift and sudden, but they did not last long.

Later, on the bridge, the Old Man stared at the sky. Aft the Southern Cross was still a bright, though drooping, symbol. The Milky Way showed its powdered, erratic course. But north and eastward the portents were definitely menacing. There was still nothing in the experience of the moment to account for that swell.

It was close to midnight. Turnbull should be up in a few minutes.

"Perhaps I'd better stand by," suggested Paul.

"No," answered Captain Tilly. "There'll be time enough. Though the glass is still falling. Well——"

He left that word suspended, hesitated a moment, then seized the telegraph handle and swung it up to the vertical position. Down in the engine room the signal clanged and the indicator leaped to "Stop!"

"Another blasted hurricane!" snapped the second engineer.

The Old Man gave orders to his mate. They hove to. He wanted to test the wind for the center of the threatened storm. When facing the wind that center should be twelve to eight points on his left hand, according to the accepted law.

Paul made his own test. The wind, such as it was, held steady in direction. Captain Tilly waited. It was difficult to judge, but that wind seemed to be increasing. Then they were in the direct path of the storm.

Captain Tilly knew all about it. He was comfortably sure of his knowledge. He could chart the track and curve of any storm that was at all amenable to the rules. He knew the dangerous semicircle, and the more favorable semicircle.

He was going through it, yet he had the assurance, the profound belief, that he could avoid the worst of it. With good engines under him there was not the slightest danger. Indeed he relished the tussle. He would make observations, notes. There would be quite an interesting chapter added to his book.

An exceedingly interesting chapter, could the Old Man have known all that lay before him and the *Nyra*.

He listened for a moment. There was not a sound in the ship audible to him; not a sound in the night except a quiet shuffling noise of water. The gale sent no messenger ahead to announce its coming.

Confidently Captain Tilly put down the handle of the telegraph. The ship trobbled again. He went to the standard compass for a moment, then briefly instructed the steersman.

Turnbull came up refreshed and ready. The eagerness of Turnbull was ever abundant.

"How are things?" he demanded. "Got the storm done up in a paper bag? The recent silence was quite impressive. My sainted aunt, but she's been rolling! Rolled me out of my little bed. Hello! Course changed! Hope the Old Man hasn't got bushed among his bally semicircles. It's my private opinion that one of these days he's going to get it in the neck—from a cyclone. There is a justice, you know!"

"He's in the chart room," Paul warned him, thinking that there might yet be times when Turnbull's boyish exuberance would get on his nerves.

Paul had settled down in the *Nyra* at once. He liked her. She had a comfortable, welcoming air, and he was glad to be in a steamer again after the irregular life in the schooner. But his introduction had been in circumstances of anxiety, and to-night there was a great unease in him. It had been a trying watch, a period of suspense aggravated by the restlessness of the captain. He did not know what to think of Tilly, but he had seen nothing of him as a seaman. He was mild and finicky. He had that womanish fussiness often characteristic of the elderly bachelor. But the trait was not incompatible with grit and decision.

It was a queer change from Jake Lawn. In the puzzling complexity of Lawn there were parts that Paul could admire. He had shown a tremendous male strength, a reckless courage, and, with all his bursts of brutality, there was a rigid sense of justice in the man. He had many sins to answer for, and there was this last affair of the *Swift*, but Paul had no feeling of active antagonism.

Lawn was still in his cabin, and Paul knew well enough the reason for that seclusion. He thought it scarcely surprising that the man should go under on one of his bouts. It was the usual reaction to a reverse. It might be all the better for him when he did emerge. He would need new strength to meet the shock that must come.

But, confound it, there was no need to trouble about Jake Lawn. He would get

what he deserved, he had side-stepped long enough.

So Paul tried to fix his mind on other things. It was unbearably stuffy in the room he was sharing with Turnbull. The electric fan did little more than stir the heated air. The floor heaved under him, then fell away crazily. A creaking ran along the length of the ship and died in a whispering crackle beyond the bridge structure.

He was tired, but would not sleep. He rested on the couch for a while. He tried to read. He thought of Karin, of the strange chain of events that had brought them together. A chance meeting with Red Hansen, the gold seeker, and all his life was decided for him. Decided, unless something intervened. But nothing should intervene.

The fan had a drowsy hum, rising above the lulling beat of the engines. He closed his eyes against the light of the electric bulb. He dozed, but he could not say for how long. He never knew, for he had no chance to calculate the period of elapsed time. The next conscious notion he had was that the electric fan had gone mad. The hum had become a roar, a roar with a moaning note.

He got up with an exclamation, and a sudden lurch of the ship sent him hurtling across the cabin to fetch up against the bunk. He held on to the bunk. She was damn sluggish in righting herself, he thought. He did not like that hesitant hanging. Then she came up, and he could distinguish the faint hum of the fan from the noise outside.

Quickly he struggled into his boots and oilskins, buttoning up as he thrust along the lifting alleyway. Outside he stood in the lee of the bridge structure for a moment. The night was full of sound, and blackness inclosed him like walls. When he moved he saw lifting, hurrying flicks of gray, and from those, he judged the height of the seas.

The wind thrummed and roared and went shrieking by. The funnel was become the voice of a giant bellowing with pain. Such an insignificant tube sticking up in the vastness to catch the hurtling fury, yet, disproportionately, to the men who lived on the plunging hull it was the very voice of the storm, sounding its deep agony.

Paul battled his way to the ladder.

Spray wrapped him in stinging lace, the drive of the blast threatened to dislodge him from his hold, but he fought on up to the bridge where Turnbull was clinging, bent forward to lessen resistance, peering.

Turnbull yelled vehemently. Paul thought it was something urgent. "What?" he shouted, but Turnbull was merely expressing his opinion that it wasn't half a breeze. "Look out!" he added with another strident yell. Paul clung to the rail.

The sea came pouring over her head, smashing and leaping to envelop their island platform, breaking and rushing aft. Paul could see better now. The wind-lashed cataract streamed whitely on either side of the deck as the vessel lifted, throwing off that weight of water. A thick salt mist spun in a glint of light from the shuttered wheelhouse. Turbulent blackness was molded into hills by the shifting filigree of foam—coursing, charging hills.

Turnbull roared something that sounded like "Overture." Yes, that was it. "Overture and beginners!" He was trying to explain that it had just begun. His voice had a carrying stridency. "Going to be a good show! Overture—" The wind sounded a mighty droning chord, deep and somber, and leaped in skirling chromatic flight to a screaming treble, as if a giant had ripped his hand across the strings of a monstrous harp.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**C**APTAIN TILLY came from the wheelhouse. The door crashed behind him, but in the noise of the storm the only sound it conveyed to his ear was of a light tap—the tap of a finger on an empty cigar box. In the darkness he projected himself between his two officers. He seemed frail of body. He felt his own frailty in all that titanic tumult, Turnbull caught his elbow as the wing of the bridge swayed on a crazy arc.

Paul turned and struggled to the chart room to examine the penciled course. A calculation had been made on a log reading about midnight. They were well out from the Barrier Reef with plenty of sea room. The first ominous markings in the great bight of the Gulf were far ahead.

When he went on deck again he thought there was a little light, as though some dim, early radiance had been whipped up by the

wind. But it was held back by the murk that covered them. All that came through was a wan grayness, stealing between the violent waters and the storm-smeared sky. It showed them the spray and the sea. It was their dawn.

They flung on, steam-driven against the force of the gale. Captain Tilly watched the rise of the glistening deck forward and piped in Paul's ear.

"Doing well—keeping—bow up."

Then Turnbull, peering far ahead, was suddenly gray to the gills. "Good Lord!" he yelled. "We're for it!"

Tilly hurled himself at the telegraph and jerked the handle. Paul took a vise-like grip on a stanchion. The sea that came at them was like a streaming mountain range, broken and foaming, looming with ponderous, invincible force between them and heaven.

It seemed to pause at the last, as if the inevitable might be held back, but that perhaps was an illusion. The bows of the *Nyra* were dragged up as by a chain. Then the smothering, tearing waters burst upon her, pounding her down, beating her under, taking what forfeits they could if they could not take her life.

With the crashing weight of its impetus, the sea leaped at the bridge. If Paul had any thought at that moment, it was that the whole superstructure must be swept away. He fancied, in a suspended point of time, that this had happened. The bridge shuddered, seemed to be thrust back. He was blinded and breathless and lifted from his feet, hurled down again and hammered. He was shooting forward then, gliding through space, but that was the effect of the swift plunge of the ship into the hollow behind the wave.

She lived, she was whole, for all that might have been carried from her decks. This was the amazing fact in his mind. He had no feeling in his body. He opened his eyes and saw that he was still holding to the stanchion. He caught at a twisted rail and pulled himself up. He swung down an inclined plane to the telegraph and jerked the handle quickly down to full.

As he moved he saw the smashed and buckled end of the bridge. His subconscious mind was dimly exercised with the details of a miraculous preservation. The wheelhouse stood, the funnel stood. He listened automatically for the sound of

the engines. He forgot the gale that howled down all other noise.

Subconsciously he considered the absence of sound. He was deaf. Or the engines had not started. But the vessel had steering way. She was lunging, rolling, pitching, lifting, with a complex motion that seemed to twist her, to demand a resilience that she could not yield. Yet she was slugging on through confusion with the sea a point or two on her bow, keeping her bow up to it, when she could.

All this was in his subconscious mind. His conscious thought was gripped by the paralyzing belief that he alone was left on the bridge. In the first few seconds he dared not look around. He was staring ahead through the flying spume at the black heaving masses that lifted against the murk of the madly swinging sky.

Another sea came crashing with the force of a battering-ram against the midship structure, flooding over him, then pouring from the bridge like a cascade. He started as a shoulder lurched against him. He saw Turnbull, a pretty pallid Turnbull, but grinning. His mind shaped some phrase, grimly. "Well, the curtain's up, the show's begun!" But he said nothing. He had not the energy to shout. He was afraid he would not hear his own words. And Turnbull, too, was speechless.

Then Paul saw that Captain Tilly was all right, holding to the rail, motionless. Turnbull was yelling something in his peculiarly penetrating voice.

"Port ladder's gone. So's a boat. 'Nother smashed—bally smithereens. My aunt, but——"

Paul heard. He was not deaf. He realized the noise again—the high scream and the rushing sibilant undertone. The high voice shrilled steadily, then fell, then rose in an insane frenzy of sound, as if it would mount to an altitude of pitch that a man's ears could not bear.

That was part of the fanatical conspiracy of destruction. To deafen, to blind, to numb, to beat down and shatter the senses of man, and then to swoop unhindered upon its helpless victim, the ship.

Paul wondered what had happened withing the shell in that lunge, pitch, and headlong dive. He began to worry about Karin. Had she been asleep or awake when it came? She might have been hurt, might be helpless now, or stunned. Karin had become the one reality.

Captain Tilly was shouting. "Stand by, Owen!"

Hauled a watch, of course. The captain hauled at the door of the wheelhouse. He would go to the speaking tube to find out how things were with Gianetti. Nothing mattered but the ship. The ship was the job. Turnbull, too, was standing by for orders, for anything that might crop up at any minute.

Hanging on, steadying himself against the toss and reel, Paul tried to bring all his mind to the ship. She lifted, the sea running under her fore shoulder. She plunged, shoving her forecabin head into a glassy slope. Once more the shuddering shock of tons of water. Then the lift.

Her stern heaved up, clear. Her head dived into another sea. It ran from glistening decks in the gray light. Then, so far as Paul could judge, there seemed to be an easing off. A lull or a pause. A gathering of energies. But she was all right. She was safe as long as the life beat within her.

Except in that one moment when the charging, mountainous range engulfed her, he had had no fear. She had surely proved herself. There was nothing to fear. Only he was worried about Karin. The ship, in the safety of her seaworthiness, in the strong driving power she possessed to combat the storm, was not really important. His one anxiety was Karin. He wanted to know about her.

A man crawled up the ladder, climbed heavily against the slope of the bridge, swayed in clumsy poise as the roll checked. Relief for the steersman. Paul spoke to the man.

"Things all right, Sims?"

"Yes, sir!" came the answering shout, but it meant nothing. Sims would be thinking about the hands. About *their* lack of comfort, *their* quarters. The ship to him was that restricted ambit in which he moved.

Captain Tilly came from the wheelhouse. His piping sounded feeble against the gale, but words came through. "Nothing wrong—engine room—as well—depend now. Can you hear—me?"

Paul nodded.

"Go down—see Mr. Purvis—Miss Hansen—hurry back—might want——"

He understood it was an order, the thing he desired most to do. He let the swing of the vessel carry him to the ladder. A

sea caught him, rushing under the platform, lifting him off the steps. He clung to the rail, stumbled down the last steps, and reeled to the lee of the cabin structure.

The alleyway was awash with a few inches of water. Lights were yellow in the gloom. He listened for a moment, dripping water from his oilskins. The gale had a deeper roar, the bass dominating the scream of the treble. More voices went to that sound, a whine and a moan mingling, rising and falling. But it was all singularly muffled, restful, almost lulling to his ears.

He could hear the pulse of the engines, could feel the vibration. It gave him a reassuring sense of contact with the ship. Up on the bridge it was as if you were removed from the whole, not part of it. You were more vitally concerned with it up there, yet the point of control seemed isolated from the heart of things.

The water in the alleyway washed over his rubber boots as it spilled down to the high sill of the door. It was hot and close, but he was free from the fierce pressure of the wind. He experienced a lightness of body, as though he had thrown down a burden. He strode quickly to the room he had given up to Karin. He knocked at the door loudly and long, but heard no answer.

This fact that there was no answer came upon him suddenly with a shock of alarm. He knocked again, loudly, banging with his fist. He opened the door. The cabin was empty. A fallen chair slithered across the wet floor and the sea-stained carpet. It swept between a scattered pair of glossy shoes. The water bottle had fallen from the rack and smashed into a score of pieces that shifted slowly, glinting in the light. A suit case had fallen open and articles had been cast down from the dressing chest. The light was on, the fan going.

He swung back abruptly from the emptiness, but before his alarm had time to grow he saw her. She was coming from the cabin that Purvis occupied. He had the immense relief of seeing her there in the yellow light, half stumbling toward him, lifting the hem of a blue kimono above the wash of the water.

"Paul!"

She called him the instant she saw him. She thrust past his restraining hands into his arms, clasping him, laughing because

he was sodden, laughing because she was cheered in her discomfort.

"I thought you were never coming," she said. "Max is hurt. His arm. Seems like a sprain, but he's all right now. The steward has been helping. What a mess! My cabin's something awful!"

"You're all right?" he asked, grasping her shoulders quickly and holding her from him.

"Yes," she answered. "But I got a fearful scare. I thought we were going down. I'd been awake for about five minutes. I held on to the bunk. Everything seemed to crash. The steward called me. I was just going to dress. Look at my poor slippers—but you're wet through! You're just ringing!"

Then she said gravely, "Paul, is it safe with us? There's no danger, is there? I've never known such a storm."

"Quite safe," he told her. "It's just in the day's work. We've got to get through. There may be hours of it yet. I don't know. It seemed a bit easier a minute ago. See you take care! I'll come down again as soon as I can. I must get back to the bridge now. But don't worry! She's doing splendidly. She's a fine ship. I have to get back!"

He could not restrain her. She had no thought of his wet clothes as she clung to him. He held her in his arms then. The door at their side opened, and she half turned, as he did himself. Jake Lawn, coming from his cabin, pulled up with a jerk. He stood there, framed in the doorway, a tall, heavy figure in white shirt and blue-serge trousers.

They were not a yard apart, the girl and the man, and above them an electric bulb burned, casting a yellow glow on the face of the girl, on the glinting gold of her hair. It shone on the hard brown face of the man, on his contracted brows, and brought up the ruddy sheen of his beard.

He stared, and Karin turned to Paul, clutching the silk gown at her breast. She saw that Paul was watching the man, this man she had never seen before. But Jake Lawn was conscious only of the girl, or of what the girl represented to him. His eyes had a fixed look that told nothing of what was in his mind, but the blood seemed to drain away under the tan of his face leaving a bluish pallor.

Jake Lawn was seeing a ghost. But she was there with all the appearance of

reality, the past translated into a living reality of the flesh.

He stood braced in the doorway as the vessel rolled heavily. Above the rushing sound of the gale, Paul could hear his hard breathing. It was suddenly quieter, a lapse in noise as though to admit that sound of breathing to his senses. There was an air of peace, of something stayed. The gale noises were external. Another essential thing was disastrously missing. And he heard what he had not heard before—the gurgle and wash of water in the alleyway, the lap of it as it fell against the painted woodwork of the cabins, the ship reeling.

Reeling, swinging around crazily, the whole length of her turning—

Jake Lawn pushed out a hand and grasped Karin by the shoulder, pressing with his fingers on the thin fabric. But still it was incredible to him. He touched her throat, the curve of her cheek, her hair.

Angrily Paul beat down that hand as Karin moved close to him for protection, not frightened, but astonished.

Then with a lurch more violent than any yet, the *Nyra* went over on her side. Lawn threw himself half into the alleyway, and clung there somehow. Holding Karin with one arm, Paul eased over with the swing, but was finally hurled against the cabin side that was now a sloping floor. He broke the fall for Karin. They were wedged in the angle formed by deck and wall. They heard the pounding of the seas that beat upon the shell.

She was down at last, the *Nyra*. They had got her almost on her beam ends, and they came on in their tumbling immensity to finish her.

"Paul!"

Karin called with a sharp staccato note of fear. He held her, thinking it was the finish. From somewhere water was pouring in on them. But the vessel was not under, not yet!

"She's fallen off into the trough," he said, as if that simple statement must allay her terror. And to himself he added, "She's going right over!"

He did not mind for himself. They were crouching there together in the near darkness that was left when the lights went out. There was a deadness in the *Nyra*, a sickening quiescence. The pause seemed endless, but it might have been counted in seconds. There was a quiver, a lifting,

a slow thrusting as if the effort were made in pain, and the ship righted herself.

They stood again in the lurching alleyway, and Paul knew the fact that had eluded him.

The engines had stopped.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**H**E told Karin to stay in her cabin. He spoke calmly, with a quick reassurance. It would be all right, he said. No danger. These things happened. Hope had swung back with the righting of the vessel, as if he too, had regained his center of gravity. He was quite clear-headed now, even remembering the broken glass on the floor of the cabin and warning her against it.

She called out something to him as he moved, but he did not hear and could not pause. He plunged into the steaming mist of the deck again and, unknown to him, Jake Lawn followed, running after him in shirt and trousers.

The seas were swinging the helpless vessel all ways. She rolled in a dizzy abandon that would test her every rivet. More than anything else he feared the strain on the smokestack, but it stood for the present and it was not wise to look further.

Lacking knowledge, he still had hope that the engine breakdown was a minor affair, to be repaired in a moment. Otherwise it wouldn't matter about the smokestack. They had all sung the praises of Gianetti. Gianetti could do anything with engines. Well, perhaps now was the time for a miracle.

To find out what had happened was the propulsive force that sent him on. The rail of the bridge ladder was torn away from him by another crazy lurch. He fell back against somebody before he recovered, but he did not stop to see who it was. It would be the boatswain or one of the hands. He went up.

On the rocketing bridge was Captain Tilly in a singular attitude. He was clinging to the rail, leaning forward, his head hanging down. Thinking he was ill, Paul grasped him with a protective hand. Tilly raised his head with an effort. He was bleeding from a deep gash over the left eye, and a bruise extended from his cheek bone over the temple. His florid face had gone as white almost as the pads of hair above his ears.

"What's happened, sir?" Paul shouted against the gale.

Tilly made strained efforts to communicate. He was at the end of his strength. He swayed, blown by the wind. The man who had followed Paul up the ladder steadied him. Together they got him into the wheelhouse. There was nowhere to lay him but on the floor.

"The ship, Mr. Owen!" he said in a weak voice. "You'll have to take over. Thought I could carry on. Don't worry about me."

"How did you get hurt, sir?"

"I don't know. When she went over. Smashed my head. You'd just gone— No, it was Turnbull. Steering rod broke. Sent him with Sims to ship the hand gear. Then she fell off into the trough."

"But what's wrong with the engines?"

"Engines! Nothing. All right. Good engines. You'll get her through, Owen. Don't waste time on me. Turnbull ought—"

The words faded and ceased. Captain Tilly had held on as long as he could.

Paul sprang to the engine-room tube, blew in it, and bent to listen. He blew twice.

The voice of Gianetti sounded from below, crackling with some intensity of feeling. "What's wrong with the deck?" it demanded. "I've whistled three times. Thought the whole caboose had carried away. Who is it? Turnbull?"

"Owen! Captain Tilly is injured. Knocked out. Why have the engines stopped?"

The answer ascended, tight with restrained passion. "Low-pressure valve spindle bent. Repairs will take eight to ten hours. It's up to you sailors now!"

Eight to ten hours! It sounded like a death warrant. Paul had been so certain the mishap was a small thing that the fact came with a dazing force. He turned from the tube and saw that the man who had helped him was Jake Lawn.

"Well, mister!" said Lawn. "You've got command! How do you like it?"

Command! He knew what he must do. He went past Jake Lawn, shot along the moving plane of the bridge, dropped down the ladder, and ran into the arms of Turnbull. They held to one another as the ship rolled, and Paul shouted information, shouted orders.

"What kept you?"

Turnbull explained. One of the hatches had seemed in danger. He had had it attended to, after finding the boatswain.

"Where is Foot?" asked Paul.

He was aft, it appeared. Paul wanted him sent forward with some hands—and the carpenter. Turnbull must attempt to set a sail. Probably it would not be much good, but they must try everything.

"I'll leave you aft. Understand?"

Turnbull nodded.

Paul was thinking of many things at once then, and taking in the weather conditions, estimating the handicap. It was a fact that the sea was easier. The sky overhead looked lighter, but the storm murk still hedged their world. He could tell by the sound that the force of the wind had decreased. Still they were wallowing in the sea, the vessel rolling like a demented thing.

The lull would give them their chance, but if another monster wave came down on them before they were ready—No time to consider that. Facts were all that counted.

A rush of water sent her staggering. Turnbull was blotted out from sight as he went aft, but he had found something to hold to and he appeared again. Hatch coamings ran like small cascades as the deck lifted. Waves continued their pounding assault.

Oil! That was important. Paul thought of it. In a minute or two he had an oil bag hung from the weather bow and more oil spreading to windward by leakage through a waste-plugged toilet bowl. Next he sent the steward up to give aid to Captain Tilly and get him settled as comfortably as possible in the chart room. The steward did what he could, and, in the process, formed the private opinion that Captain Tilly was dying.

Meanwhile Turnbull made fast a stay-sail and got it hoisted, but when he gave the order to haul on the sheet, the canvas went with a bang and fluttered in ribbons. Useless work. Might as well set a pocket handkerchief. For once Turnbull was subdued. He had to struggle with his spirits.

Gianetti's struggle down in the engine room was of another order. There was no lack of spirit in him or in his men. He toiled with a passionate absorption, swore ferociously, moved with quick, precise movements. He and his officers were working against time and the sea and the wind.

And if they were ever permitted to finish—which was doubtful with those bloody sailors up there—the whole battle would be so beautifully reduced to a few words for official purposes.

"Disconnected eccentric rods at top end and drew them clear. Valve spindle removed leaving valve inside casing but secured—" And so on, and so on. And the only flattering unction that Mr. Gianetti would lay to his soul would be the observation in his own private log, "Rolling hell's delight all the time." Always supposing the "deck" pulled them through, which was too much to expect of the "deck."

Gianetti was wholly Italian in his dark devotion to the engines. It may have been the Italian in him that made him sing, but the singing was entirely a subconscious act. He would have denied vehemently that he had sung at all. Words came in a throaty baritone, rhythm was distorted to fit the task.

"But she proved to be a frigate—and she up with her ports,  
And fires with a thirty-two!"

"Now hold that blasted rod, will you?" he snapped at the fourth engineer.

The junior was young and earnest, and most anxious to learn. It had never entered his head that they might roll over and go to the bottom before the job was done. He was scarcely conscious of any motion. He had wondered why that half-caste Australian black had been sick in the stoke-hole. But now he was wondering about the job.

Of course the idea was to let the steam pass through the low-pressure cylinder to the condenser.

"What about the orifice?" he asked suddenly.

"Blind flange it!"

"But—"

Gianetti took one second off to stare.

"For Heaven's sake will you shut up!" he screamed.

Then the song went on, calmly, deliberately fitting itself to the required rhythm:

"It come uncommon near,  
But we answered with a cheer,  
Which paralyzed the Parley-voo,  
D'ye see?  
Which paralyzed the Parley-voo!"

Suddenly he stopped working. He had his views on the vulnerability of inanimate



matter. The engines had done a lot of service, but also they were in good shape. Funny the spindle should seize. Yet the thing did happen at times. Sand or emery. Only no one but a maniac, a suicidal maniac with intimate knowledge—— It was too preposterous.

He plunged back to the task with wild fervor. At last the rods were free.

On deck the fight was waged with a calmness that hid the effort of desperation. Turnbull got a reefed sail to hold, but it was practically useless. The oil had more effect. It checked a little the rough frenzy of the breaking seas.

Paul, and Foot the boatswain, several hands, and Jake Lawn labored to get the sea anchor ready, and Jake Lawn with his great strength was worth three men. He took his place with the crew, more properly he dominated them as a sort of lieutenant to Paul, backing up Paul with all his force and energy.

He was sober again, cold sober, as if he could throw off the effects of the drink with a shake of his shoulders. He wore no clothes but his shirt and trousers, and the shirt, torn open at the neck, was a thin wet covering for his immense, laboring body. He would come through a sea, stolid as a stone image, tossing the water from him.

They all bent, straining to their task, wary for any wave that might threaten their separate destruction. They worked in what shelter they could get from the fore-castle deck, but sometimes they were broad-side on to the wind, and sometimes the waters piled down on them, submerging them. They would be lifted into the flying wind again, clinging, panting, sighing, pitiful souls, to go on with their struggle.

The wind fell off, died with an uncanny suddenness, but the water would not be stilled. The lull was the reward for their brave fight. They felt themselves indomitable before the winds of the world. And the men saw Jake Lawn as the symbol and spring of their indomitable will. But the symbol and spring was subject to Paul Owen, who was the voice of the ship, her will to fight, to stagger through, to live and possess for her purposes the seven seas.

They put down their two bolted spars in the form of a cross, they took their runner of chain and hitched it round the legs of their cross, making the frame of

the big kite that would keep the ship head to sea. They fastened on the holding chains and lashed the double sail canvas to the frame. They made fast a kedge anchor to the bottom spar and, hitched a trip line to the top, and the hawser to the chain bridle.

And their perils and adventures in breaking, swamping seas were incidental to all this, to be forgotten as they shook the salt water from their eyes and hair. They had secured the frame of their kite to prevent it from being washed away. They were ready to cast off these lashings, when Foot, who had been a lookout man for the party, shouted in alarm.

Another giant sea was rushing down upon them. They broke for cover, for handhold, for anything that was secure, to keep them from the seizing, sweeping force of the water.

All saw the enormity of the danger except Paul, who was testing a tackle made fast to the foremost backstay. Lifting, towering, the wave hung poised over the bow. The vessel seemed to be sucked in under the curve of the banding foam-crested peak. Then, like a sentient thing, it leaped. The tower of water swung down falling.

In that last second, Jake Lawn sprang at Paul, hurled him down against the bulwark stay, wedged himself in on top of him and wound his arms round a mooring bitt. Then it was his strength alone that saved them. The sea swept over them, washing in boiling foam against the bridge deck and carrying destruction along the whole line of the vessel.

The wind had come back with its ravenous howl. The seas were coursing with menacing speed again. The first gust took Turnbull's trysail with it, but the kite, the sea anchor that was to save them, was ready.

Paul got up too breathless to cast his voice against the gale. The hands came careening across the slanting deck. They swung the contraption of timber and chain and canvas overboard with the tackle. The weight of the kedge anchor held it upright. They veered out the hawser and made fast. The kite was set to the sea, and the vessel, riding by it, was removed from her helpless plight.

She rode out the rest of the storm. She was not yet free from the battering seas that leaped her bows and wrought their

havoc along her decks, but she had position and could keep it. And the wind dying and leaping up again, coming in gusts as the storm spent itself in the forenoon, she yawed about and pitched to the swell. By then there was no more danger.

Captain Tilly was conscious when Paul was able to go to him, but it was manifest that he would not be able to resume his active command. He listened to Paul's report with no keen understanding of what the *Nyra* had endured. He was firm and determined only in giving the order that the ship must proceed to the wrecked schooner with the least possible delay.

The reputed misogynist had then to suffer the attentions of Karin, and he must have admitted that at least she was gentler than the steward. Max Purvis had come through with no further hurt, though he was compelled to carry his damaged arm in a sling. There was one other patient forward, stunned and bruised, and several of the hands had minor injuries; but the storm had taken no life.

In the engine room Gianetti worked fiercely at the last stage of his temporary repair, and cursed because the fourth engineer was all in. That worrying suspicion that somebody had tampered with the engine afflicted him at times. There was no one he could suspect. He had no doubt of his officers. He could say nothing, make no accusation. But he would watch, and see that a close watch was kept. Now he was too tired. He sang no longer. He gave all his remaining energy to the job in hand.

Early in the afternoon the familiar throb ran through the fabric of the *Nyra*. The steering rod had been mended, the steam gear tested, and the steersman stood in his accustomed place. The ship moved forward, rolling on a blue swell under a clear sky. Paul checked the course, steadied her head by the standard compass, and instructed the steersman.

He had one more job. He left Turnbull on the bridge and went to find the chief engineer. Gianetti was still in his grime and grease. They spoke together for a few minutes, and the result of it was that Bicho was transferred to the deck department.

Paul, too, had been worried by suspicion, but he feared nothing more now. The *Nyra* would touch at no port until she had found the *Swift*. Then there would

be evidence and Lawn and Bicho would have to face it.

Jake Lawn strode forward to the hatch where he had labored that morning. He was dressed with his old neatness. He had trimmed his beard. He looked down at the sea anchor that would presently be dismantled. His heavy slanting brows drew together, as if in a spasm of self-contempt.

Coming from his cabin in that moment before the engines stopped he had cared nothing for the ship, nothing for his own fate. Then was that encounter in the alleyway when Mary Frazer had looked at him through the eyes of Karin.

Mary Frazer, wife to Olsen, was dead. But Mary Frazer lived in the child, the grown child. It was an intimation of immortality to Jake Lawn. Karin Hansen did not know him, would never know him. But she was carrying on the pale flame and beauty of her mother. It was her charge to keep and tend a perpetual flame.

But if the ship went down, carrying them all with their miserable coils of petty tragedy, she would be lost. Not Karin Hansen—she did not matter—but Mary Frazer would be lost. The thought had been too much to endure in that dawn when the ship had quivered in an agony that might have been her last.

Now, when the work was done, the man who stood with one foot resting on the hatch, was supremely contemptuous of the mystical, sentimental Jake Lawn who had overthrown him. He lifted his ruddy-peaked beard into the wind and laughed. He had seen a ghost, but the ghost had brought him back to himself.

His acts that day had derived their force from the same mysticism that had left him in a welter of indecision during the last mad voyage of the *Swift*—the persistence of Mary Frazer in his mind. Now he remembered only the look in the eyes of Karin Hansen when he had laid a hand on her to prove her reality, a look he interpreted as one of fear and contempt.

He was done then, he was finished with all that insanity. He had himself to save, and Bicho. Himself first of all, and the faithful worm if it could be contrived. The first step was to make sure that Bicho was right; that Oliver Berry had been picked up and brought to port.

Captain Lawn waited till night, when the stars were out in the blue-black sky. He

waited till Paul Owen was on the bridge alone, then he climbed the ladder the storm had left.

"May I come up, mister?" he asked from the wing.

"Yes," said Paul. "Come up!"

Lawn leaned over the rail and stared at the heavens.

"So we're not making for Mayer Island!"

It was an assertion rather than an inquiry, but it brought no surprise to Paul. The tone implied knowledge, and in any case the fact must be apparent in a few hours.

"No," he answered.

"And, as an interested party, may I ask where we are bound for?"

Lawn had his head out over the rail. He rested on his forearms, his shoulders flung forward.

"For the Fly River," said Paul quietly.

Lawn swung round and straightened

himself. He laughed loudly. "Good for you, mister!" he exclaimed. "I hope you'll find it interesting. If you need a pilot, call me. I don't mind a small job like that."

He was going down. Paul caught him by an arm. "Wait!" he commanded. "I want to know something, and I want to know it now. Is David Frazer alive?"

"If you ever find the *Swift* you'll get the answer to that question," replied Lawn, and he stepped lightly down the ladder.

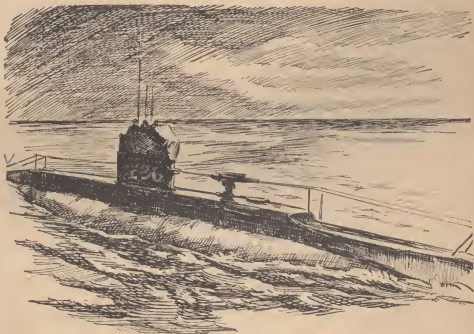
He laughed again when he was alone. He was thinking of Karin Hansen, and he had seen enough in the alleyway that morning to recognize the potential weapon at hand. Paul Owen loved Karin Hansen, and Paul Owen was in command. Karin Hansen, a hostage for the liberty if not the life of Jake Lawn! The idea amused him. It had a suggestion of poetic justice about it. And she, with Mary Frazer's eyes, had looked at him with contempt!

To be concluded in the next issue of SEA STORIES.



# Refit

By Harold Bradley Say



Submarine warfare is complicated by the presence of friends as well as enemies.

**T**O three persons clustered on the narrow little conning-tower bridge of *E-36*, the monotonous chant of the Diesels' exhaust was music of a sweetness that no symphony of the masters could ever approach. *Fizzety-bump! Fizzety-bump!* Down in the tunnel of electric lights, glistening mazes of valves, gauges and machinery, the deafening clatter of the mighty engines became a harmony no less sweet to those who listened.

This one more voyage—then refit. Refit! Three weeks in the dry dock—three weeks on shore—three weeks respite from that eternity of pitching and rolling, diving, lying on the bottom while air grew thick and fetid, plunging down to the depths while one waited for the enemy's bow to rip through, counting the seconds till the depth charge must let go—till a

rush of water—darkness ended it all. Three weeks respite from cold, unsavory grub—from the smell of dirty, sweating bodies. Relaxation of nerves screwed up to snapping point from the harrowing monotony of it all. In brief, three weeks respite from a life in hell—in hell no less a hell because it was surrounded by water.

*Fizzety-bump! Fizzety-bump!* Every turn of the boat's twin screws put her nearer the enemy's waters.

The sun had been gone near two hours. Though there was no moon it was not pitch black, and the night was clear. A brisk little breeze from out of the east kicked up a bit of a sea that caught *E-36* on the starboard bow. An ideal night for knocking along at surface trim. Not bright enough for the lurking eyes of the enemy or for the zealous orbs of some suspicious friend; water agitated suffi-

ciently so as not to leave the sub's wake set off alone like a sparkling trail of white across a field of darkness.

Refit!

To Lieutenant-commander Cartney Wilton, peering out over the wet, heaving world ahead, it meant a hotel room with white sheets, great spring bed, hot baths, brightly lighted dining saloon, glittering silverware, steaming dishes, merry laughter, shining ball-room floors, gay companions—a world that was but a hazy memory.

To Lieutenant Davis Fenwick, R. N. R., the navigating officer, standing there beside him, it meant an old stone ivy-clad cottage, a garden up near Glasgow, and "the missus" who had measured time before the war in the intervals between the home-port calls of a merchant ship.

To the helmsman, at the steering post, it meant hours just as precious in a tenebrous house not far from the Cunard docks in Liverpool.

And to each and every one going about his duties, or trying to snatch a turn of sleep down in the vitals of the boat, *refit* held kindred priceless promises. The thought of it overshadowed all else.

E-36 was off for a new field—bound for the Baltic, where waters teemed with enemy merchant craft carrying priceless cargoes of ore down from Sweden to German munitions factories; where German fighting craft still roved the sea with little opposition. The path that led there was hazardous, as even the most meagerly informed member of the sub's crew knew; also, as each man knew, the goal held a promise almost beyond belief compared with the arduous patrolling of the enemy's North Sea coast. Yet, the eagerness, the excitement that such a mission would have ordinarily held, was secondary to that which had flamed up around that magic word—*refit*!

"A cup of cocoa, sir?"

Wilton glanced toward the sailor framed in the light that found its way up the conning-tower hatch.

"Right-o, Jones," snapped he gingerly.

"Thanks, my man."

"And, Lieutenant Fenwick—a cocoa, sir?" The sailor, balancing on the steel ladder, was reaching up another cup and saucer.

"Aye, Thanks, Jones," droned Fenwick with an habitual nasal twang. "Even the cocoa smells more appetizing to-night."

"Fenwick," said Wilton between sips, "it is said that the Lord keeps an eye open for fools and drunkards. 'Pon my word, I believe it is the truth. Take me. When they offered me command of one of those new-type boats building, I nearly took it. Beastly tempting, you know. Quarters like a battleship compared with this. Not half so crowded. Speed, six-inch guns, and all that, with a chance of operating with the fleet. And if I'd taken it I'd missed out on refit—been hopping right out to sea while the rest of you lucky dogs were loafing ashore."

"Aye?" answered Fenwick, with a glance at the Sperry repeater. "And had you taken it—left us to have a new captain wished off on us, I'd have said it served you bloody well right."

In the darkness Wilton grinned. There was a satisfaction in going to sea with subordinates like Fenwick, like Seaburn, the twenty-year-old second in command. Loyal, efficient, dependable and likable, the both of them—the whole crew, from old Blakely, the chief engine-room artificer, on down to the newest sailor.

E-36 slipped on through the night.

"Hello," ejaculated Fenwick quietly. "Something off the port bow."

Wilton glimpsed the lump of black on the horizon about the same second. For half a minute he regarded it intently.

"Tell them to look alive below," directed he without taking his eyes off the shape. "May want to dive."

Fenwick shouted down the hatch.

"Aye, aye, sir," a voice floated up out of the clattering depths.

The shape drew no closer, and shortly it receded.

"We're leaving him," commented Wilton. "Glad he wasn't coming this way. Merchantman, likely."

He moved toward the hatch.

"I'll be dropping down now, Fenwick, for a wink or two. Call me at once if anything shows up. Wake me at four thirty."

"Right-o. Better sleep long and hard—get ready for the future."

**S**TEADILY the submarine thumped northeastward. The night is short in these northern waters in the month of August. A few hours and a pale glow diffused the horizon to the east. The wind was sharper and carried a clammy touch than earlier in the night.

Wilton knocked his fists together and made a burring sound.

"Beastly damn ocean—eh, Seaburn?"

The sub lieutenant swore cheerfully and agreed with the boat captain's sentiments. An engine-room artificer clambered out of the hatch for a smoke and a breath of fresh air before he turned in after his watch. Shortly he vanished below. The helmsman, in an undertone, hummed a tune.

A distant light blinked off on the starboard bow. Wilton studied it for several seconds, consulting his illuminated wrist watch as it flashed.

"That's off Horn's reef," commented he. "Not too bad. She's a good old boat. I wouldn't trade her for some of these fancy new ones admiralty's turning out in the last few months."

"Quite right, sir," chortled the youthful second in command. "Particularly when we're scheduled for refit."

"On the head, my boy," laughed Wilton heartily. "Exactly."

Then, "What-ho, Seaburn?" He spoke sharply and pointed off to port. "Did you see that blinker?"

"Yes, sir; almost abeam?" There was an unspoken question in the sub lieutenant's words. Would Wilton dive now or take a chance?

"Trawler's, I'll gamble," spoke Wilton calmly. "Nearly five. We'll knock along a while yet—till something puts us down. Time enough ahead for sweating along underneath."

An hour crept by. Clots of smoke grew closer two points off the port bow.

"Neutrals, perhaps," hazarded Wilton evenly; "and again, perhaps not." He watched the smoke trail closely. "Working westward—going to give us more surface running," opined he cheerfully.

A quick exclamation from Seaburn. "Dead ahead, sir! Two ships!"

Wilton saw them, faint wisps of smoke. He grabbed up his glasses. What he saw stimulated him to quick and decisive action. Battle craft! Certain it was that sharp eyes peered out from crows' nests and bridges, sweeping the ocean for just such blobs as *E-36*.

The boat's captain reached for the klaxon button. The hooter blared out its warnings through the vitals of the submarine.

"Diving!" jerked Wilton coolly. He

shouted down the hatch: "Diving stations!"

Answering shouts floated up from below. Came a quick cessation in the thump of the Diesels. The sub's electric motors broke out with their soft, musical humming.

Seaburn was already down below, calling orders. The helmsman screwed the magnetic-compass lid hard home, unshipped the gyro repeater, and scuttled below to carry on his steering from the control room.

Wilton snatched up a stool, his glasses, and sextant. He cast a final look on the two specks on the horizon ahead, then darted down the hatch. He slammed home the lid and screwed the strongback into position.

"Ready, sir!" called out Seaburn. "All ready, sir!"

"Right-o," nodded Wilton. "Flood one and four."

"Open one and four Kingstons and one and four main vents!" commanded Seaburn quickly.

Hands flew to the numerous valves and levers.

In orderly sequence came other commands.

Two minutes later *E-36* was boring along beneath the sea, invisibly and silently as some great fish.

No clattering thump of Diesels now; only the subdued humming of the powerful electric motors, a muffled sobbing in an air line, the clicking of the log.

"Our own ships, nine to one," commented Wilton to Fenwick, who was up and rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. "If not, some neutrals. Don't want to be seen on this trip—not till we get into the hunting grounds."

Fenwick, Seaburn, in fact, all the crew, understood this—that secrecy of approach on their present voyage was fully half their objective. Admiralty didn't want every enemy warship in the Baltic looking for them before they got in their work.

"All right," Wilton commanded to the coxswains at the hydroplane and diving-rudder wheels. "Eighteen feet—no more! On your toes, now! Going to have a look-see."

"Eighteen it is, sir," chanted a coxswain. "Steady at eighteen."

Wilton sent the periscope slowly upward. White foamed about the lens as the long, slim cylinder broke surface. Intently

he pressed against the eyepiece. Quickly he jerked it down.

"Fifty feet," commanded he. Then half aside: "Cruisers—our own—and making knots."

The nose of *E-36* canted slightly downward.

"Fifty feet, sir. Fifty feet."

"Hold her there."

The captain turned to the man on the hydrophones. "What do you hear, Smith?"

"Propellers, sir, faintly." He listened further. "Dying out."

"Good enough," said Wilton. "We'll have another look in fifteen minutes."

**A**T the end of that time Wilton again brought the boat to observation depth. Nothing in sight. He held her there, running along with periscope protruding. In half an hour he hauled it down. A fleet of trawlers dotted the ocean ahead. Throughout the rest of the day *E-36* crept along beneath the surface. Frequently she switched from course so as not to pass too close to any alert patrol boat that might be on the job with listening gear and depth charges. A submarine on surface flashing recognition signals was apt to receive the season's compliments from some hair-trigger patrol ship's guns, to say nothing of the tendency of merchant ships to shoot first and ask questions afterward.

But this was routine existence to those within the steel confines of *E-36*. Time enough to be concerned when she left the open waters of the North Sea behind.

Afternoon found the under-water boat nosing up the Skager-Rak. The day was exceptionally clear, but a choppy sea permitted judicious use of the periscope in dodging the traffic of this comparative narrow body of water separating the southern shores of Norway from the northwestern extremity of Denmark.

Seven thirty o'clock.

"Diving stations!" That command so eagerly awaited by men who have seethed and sweated through endless hours in a smelly prison tight-sealed from all the outside world. A command that also may presage a definite and conclusive turn in their respective destinies, for the instant of breaking water is fraught with many possibilities.

But no destroyer came charging down on *E-36*. No lurking trawler bore down

with its load of deadly depth charges. As serenely as if on peace-time maneuver, the submarine emerged in the thickening twilight. Moments later she was banging along on her Diesels, charging batteries as she went.

One by one the lights on shore and islands twinkled out to send their beams out to passing mariners. Hanstholm, Hirtshals, Anholt, and their neighbors, flashed away. Just before dawn a collection of traffic bore down on *E-36*. Regretfully Wilton gave orders for diving.

"But we can't grouse about our luck," he said to Fenwick. "We've had the night most to ourselves."

An hour and a half, lying on a shoal spot, listening to traffic passing overhead; then a slow, blind crawl till afternoon, when nearly off the entrance of the Sound. There *E-36* lay waiting darkness again, for a try on the surface. With twilight all but gone, Wilton took her up.

Midnight. Lights blazed out from Denmark's shore. Most of the coast of Sweden lay shrouded in darkness. On pushed the English submarine to more dangerous waters. Dodging and diving, Wilton picked his way. The glow in the heavens over Copenhagen and the dazzling lights of Malmo were left astern.

Thoughtfully, wistfully, Wilton regarded them. "Fancy, Fenwick—just fancy—cities where people have lights at night! Where people go about their business—go to dances—stay home if they want to; don't have to live and die by the count—civilians—peace! Dash it all, Fenwick, I wish I were a Dane or a Swede."

"Aye," agreed the less-imaginative Fenwick; "but then, we have a refit coming up—a fortnight, then home and a regular holiday."

A searchlight blazing out some miles ahead ended Wilton's philosophizing on the merits of being a citizen of a neutral country.

Again the command for diving stations. The Baltic closed over *E-36*. A day and night of dodging Swedish patrols, fishing boats, and innumerable other craft. Twice shadowy shapes of destroyers sent the under-water fighter plunging to the bottom—to bottom too shallow for safety. Once, in bumping out to deeper soundings, she broke surface. Fortunately no eyes were close enough to see, and mercifully the ocean's floor dropped deeper. The nerves

of Wilton and his men went back to normal.

"Close—what?" commented the boat's captain to Seaburn.

"Ought to dredge the ruddy ocean," returned the other without a smile.

Dawn of another day. *E-36* was lying inert on the bottom, off Swinemunder.

Wilton glanced at his watch.

"Diving stations!" commanded he. The same vibrant calmness in his voice, the same deliberate coolness about his movements, yet an intangible difference. The same with Fenwick, busy with dividers, chart and pencil. Likewise with Seaburn, up forward in the torpedo compartment. Among the crew little talking—a quiet alertness with each man intent upon his duty. To a man the personnel of *E-36* knew that this trip would not be a dud—a washout. Game was here—big game, and with it all, the deadliest hazards that surround a submarine.

Slowly the needles marked the upward movement of the boat moving slowly ahead.

"Eighteen," commanded Wilton tersely. "Not a foot higher."

"Eighteen," echoed a coxswain quietly. The needle traveled on around the dial.

"Eighteen it is, sir. Eighteen."

Eyes glanced toward Wilton at the periscope. His hand moved on the elevating switch. If he slipped—if he guessed wrong—made one mis-move? But he wouldn't—not their captain.

There! The periscope was above the surface. With stifled eagerness faces turned toward the control room. Ears strained for the first word. Muscles tensed in hands that rested on wheels, valves, switches, and levers.

Wilton brought the periscope down with a rush.

What he saw was a freighter down to her load lines, plowing along under guard of two destroyers, and the destroyers were enemy craft.

"Steer forty!" barked he succinctly.

"Forty!" snapped the man on the rudder wheel.

Fenwick regarded him questioningly, eagerly.

"Ore ship," jerked the boat's captain. "Big one." He jumped to shout up the tunnel where, in a maze of valves and dials, stood Seaburn and his men, behind the polished faces of the torpedo tubes that winked beneath the electric lights.

"All ready, Seaburn?"

"All ready, sir. Firing tanks charged. Tubes flooded."

Off the starboard bow the big freighter plowed her way, all unconscious of the deadly danger lurking beneath the waves. Ahead, and flanking her course, the destroyers cut through the water.

**S**ORELY tempting to Wilton was the vision of the nearest destroyer, which, from its course, would undoubtedly cross the range of his tubes about a half minute before the freighter came into line. Can't help it. The ship, with its precious Swedish ore, was worth three or four destroyers. If he fired on the destroyer first and missed—even if he hit—the fighting craft would likely drive him down before he got home a shot into the laden freighter. Enough to get away after he had sent a fish into the ore ship.

"All right," spoke Wilton, again pressing his eyes against the perisher. "One more look. Everybody ready."

Not a sound inside the submarine now—not even a sibilant whisper; only the low droning of the motors, a soft stewing in an air line, the click of the log.

Wilton raised his hand.

"Port bow—fire!" he cried.

A perceptible jar, a hissing within the air lines, the surging of a compensator pump.

"Steer fifty!" said Wilton.

"Sta'b'rd bow—fire!"

Another slight jar as the deadly monster of destruction, at some forty knots, sped toward its target.

*Blam!* *E-36* trembled.

"Down!" thundered Wilton. "Eighty feet! Flood the auxiliary. Steer five."

Just as the needles began registering her drop, another muffled, reverberating shock shook the submarine.

A faint smile flickered across Wilton's tense, set face. "The destroyer—zig-zagged—waited just long enough for me to get off one at him and one at the ship. Got both of them."

*Blam! Blam!* Two muffled explosions vibrated the walls of *E-36*, made the air quiver inside of her.

"The other one's dropping charges," jerked Wilton. "Blind. Didn't see us."

The boat bumped sharply, slid on smoothly for half a minute, then bumped again.



"Bottom," observed Wilton. "Stop her."

Still as a rock on the ocean floor lay the submarine, with all auxiliaries shut down.

"May be listening for us," he spoke to Fenwick and Seaburn. "We'll stay here an hour, then have a look."

The hydrophones caught the sound of propellers beating around above. Rescue craft, and perhaps other destroyers hunting for a sign of the enemy.

"Poor devils——" Wilton jerked a thumb upward. "Feel rather sorry for them, but I guess we'd better do the customary thing, eh, Seaburn?"

"Quite right," agreed the youthful second in command.

"Oh, Jones," called Wilton. "A bottle of champagne—and two bottles of rum for the men."

The boat's captain, Fenwick and Seaburn clinked glasses, downed their drinks without a word. The rum bottles traveled from hand to hand among the men. Silently they gulped down their ceremonial portions.

An hour later *E-36* crept up for a look. No sign of the ore ship or destroyers, but among a vast field of wreckage, swimming figures and floating shapes, half a dozen fishing craft were busy.

Just before sundown the submarine spotted another steamer coming down out of the north. The wind was south southeast, with a fairly choppy sea and a bright sun—ideal for attack from the south. Twenty minutes later another enemy steamer loaded down with ore went plunging to the bottom.

"'Pon my word, Fenwick," breathed Wilton glowingly; "we can't break out another bottle this quick! We'll be drunk, the ruddy lot of us."

Unbelievable luck—two priceless cargoes of ore and a destroyer in one day, the first day on the hunting grounds.

"Another lucky day and we'll be cleaned out of fish—ready for home," grinned Fenwick.

"Right-o," responded Wilton. "With luck. Luck's a strange lady, you know. Queer habits and fancies. I hope she's with us."

And she was. That corner of the Baltic was alive with destroyers, patrol boats, and light cruisers next day, all out with one purpose—to send this scoundrelly English sub or submarines to the bottom.

Cautiously *E-36* crept along under the surface with an eye peeking out at guarded intervals for a glimpse of enemy merchantmen. Not a one in sight, but of war craft there was plenty.

"We were sent primarily to sink these ore ships," Wilton reminded his subordinates. "But if the enemy comes pushing along with his battleships or cruisers I'm going to have a try."

Mid-morning of the second day's operations. Out of the northwest came a three-funneled cruiser with two destroyers zig-zagging on her bows.

Minutes later a flash of fire on her water line. A second flash just abaft the first amidships. Up shot two massive columns of water, followed instantly by a hurtling cloud of thick gray smoke that enveloped the entire ship. Her magazine had gone. The air was filled with madly flying debris.

*E-36* dived with shells screaming down on the spot where her periscope had been.

*Blanety-blam!* A sickening concussion. Out went the lights. Silence for an instant, then confused murmuring, the scraping patter of feet in the darkness.

"Steady, all!" shouted Wilton in a voice sharply calm and commanding.

An emergency line of lights flashed on again. The leading torpedo man worked at the switchboard.

"Shot the fuse," grunted he. He inserted a new one. The main light circuit blazed back to life.

"Eighty feet—eighty-five," chanted a man on the diving wheel. "Ninety." *Bumpety-bump!* Bottom.

Again everything was shut down. A half dozen other explosions were felt inside the boat, but they were distant and scattered.

Wilton directed search for possible leaks. None was reported.

"No oil's getting away from us," commented Wilton, "or the blighter's would have spotted us."

"Aye," agreed Fenwick. "How about feeling sorry for the bloody rogues now?" added he significantly.

"Right-o," smiled Wilton grimly. "No regrets. Like to sink the whole ruddy lot of them, every one afloat—fish boats and all. But," he added with an air of finality, "we're at the end of our tether this time. One more torpedo. A thorough lot, these enemy blighters, or we might be able

to waylay one of their packets without escort and give 'em a taste of shell fire."

"Fine thought, sir," agreed Fenwick. "But then, you know, admiralty has an idea it wants to keep this boat afloat a while. Foolish, of course."

"A cup of cocoa, sir, and a bit of bread and jam?"

Wilton scowled in feigned belligerency.

"Jones, my man, some day I'll be tempted to shoot you out the tubes. Cocoa and bread and jam, pressed ham, boiled eggs, tinned food. I'm fed up till their mention sickens me."

The cook regarded him with an unsmiling obeisance.

"Right-o, Jones," added Wilton wearily. "Anything, eh? Seaburn—Fenwick?"

The three officers picked their way through the cramped tunnel to the little cubbyhole designated by the dignified and somewhat misleading title of "wardroom."

**P**AST midnight three days later. Again the lights of Malmo and Copenhagen had vanished down behind the sea astern—this time far back to the south. *E-36* was homeward bound. For an hour she had been thumping along on her Diesels, dodging lights and shapes that dotted the Kattegat. By dusk next day she was boldly working down the Skager-Rak. Hanging on by her vents, ready to duck beneath the sea. Traffic was thick. Sharp watch and constant variations in course were necessary.

The night was clear, with a chilly breeze kicking up sizable little seas. Occasionally a gust of wind picked up the top of a creaming whitecap and showered it down on the little conning-tower bridge. The knot of figures clustered there were dripping wet and cold—cold in body, but not in spirit.

Homebound. Success behind them. Dry dock, three weeks in port, a snatch of paradise two or three days ahead—with good luck.

"Nice damn ocean—this corner of the North Sea," swore Wilton cheerfully. "Nice damn ocean."

"Quite right," agreed Fenwick, a stocky bundle of rubber coat, hat and boots. "But I'll deed away my share of it without complaint."

A hotel bed—Wilton felt himself sinking into soft sheets. A hot bath—he sensed the warm magic of it sinking into

his skin. Brightly lighted dining rooms, glittering silverware, women's laughter, gay companions. Days and nights of it—two weeks or more. Countless happy visions flashed before the eyes of the boat's commander staring out on the rolling, heaving world of water. Refit—paradise.

Daylight. *Fizzety-bump! Fizzety-bump!* Out in the open sea now, *E-36* still banged along on her Diesels, knocking off ten knots at surface trim. Not a speck of smoke on the horizon; not one suspicious blob in that world of gray, heaving ocean.

Lieutenant-commander Cartney Wilton smiled beneficently on the silent, empty vastness.

Homebound. Refit. Refit!

*Fizzety-bump! Fizzety-bump!* The pulsations of the motors chimed the word. Refit. They turned it to music—to a rhythmic, joyous harmony.

"Hallo?" Sharp and startling Fenwick's exclamation. His glasses jumped upward.

Instinctively Wilton's eyes focused on the spot—a faint, elusive speck on the horizon to the northwest. For a second it was visible, then gone, dropped down into a sea trough.

"Submarine." Fenwick spoke without excitement.

"No question," agreed Wilton quickly. "Hope he hasn't seen us."

He reached for the klaxon button. The horn blared out its raucous warning.

"If he hasn't seen us he'll cross our bows," predicted Wilton. "We'll get up close enough to see who he is."

*E-36* slipped beneath the waves. A half hour later Wilton edged his periscope cautiously above the waves. Intently he stared into the eyepiece, then hastily lowered the protruding tube.

"Enemy," said he shortly. "Big one—two guns—a mile off, and doing at least eleven."

*E-36* submerged could do but six to seven knots. The enemy, one of their faster and larger types, also had the English craft far outgunned. Furthermore, if Wilton elected to break surface—chance a shelling duel—odds favored the enemy. Likely he would get off a half a dozen rounds before *E-36* would be entirely out of water and ready with her gun. On the other hand, *E-36*, undetected, had an immeasurable advantage if the big enemy

were in effective torpedo range and if Wilton had torpedoes. Of the latter, he had one lone fish, and at best, the enemy would cross his closest range at approximately twelve hundred yards.

With Fenwick he did some rapid calculations.

"He's liable to be put down any time," argued Wilton against an inward inclination to stay his hand; "and likely I wouldn't get another rap at him. It's a long chance, but I'm going to let him have it."

Forward, up in the torpedo compartment, Seaburn and his crew waited with steady hands and nerves.

The periscope crept up for a final snatching glance. Wilton raised his hand.

"Fire!" He jerked down the periscope. He stared fixedly at his watch. His lips moved in silent counting. One—two—three—four—five—six—the second hand ticked on. Wilton raised his hand, poised like a race starter with a gun. Then inanimately it fell. He pursed his lips, gave a slight shrug of his shoulders.

"Missed," muttered he with a rueful glance at those about him. "Missed."

The others said nothing.

Wilton turned to the periscope. "We'll see whether he saw it," commented he. With an exclamation of surprise, he jerked it down.

"Carrying on calm as you please, but he's changed course—couldn't have seen, or he'd dived."

He frowned in the manner of a man working out a problem, debating a question with himself.

**I**F it were two hours later," he said to Fenwick, "I'd break surface—have a go with the gun. I wonder——" He left his question unspoken and again turned to the periscope. He raised it above the surface. He peered sharply into the eyepiece, then slowly swept the horizon. Abruptly he steadied the tube.

"Dived," he announced briefly. "Steering due west! We'll stay on his tail."

He gave the command for changing course.

"Don't think he has seen us," he said to Fenwick and Seaburn, who, too, was in the control room, since there was no further use remaining with the tubes. "We'll tag along and have a look-see every five minutes. He'll come up at dark, and we'll

do the same—beat him to the draw. Have the gun crew on their toes, Seaburn."

For an hour the enemy pushed on, unaware of the *E*-boat close on his tail.

"Foolish, likely, but there's a chance," commented Wilton.

The periscope stole surfaceward again. Consternation leaped to the face of the man who stared into it.

"Stop her!" he cried. Then: "Full astern—both engines!"

Tense faces turned on him.

"Convoy!" exclaimed Wilton. "Coming right down on top of us. Enemy's stopped and hauled down his periscope."

Every man of *E-36* knew what was coming. That the enemy was lying ready to let go torpedoes at ships of their flag—send them plunging to the bottom with priceless cargo and lives of countless men.

To break water to flash out a warning meant to invite the fire of a dozen guns, the thunderous rush of destroyers—the tearing blasts of depth bombs. It meant that all eyes would be diverted on themselves, that the enemy would have just so much more chance of getting home his shots. Home into *E-36* and vessels of the convoy.

Men stared at one another. Faces went white and taut.

Little drops of sweat that came not alone from the fetid air inside *E-36* oozed out on the forehead of Lieutenant-commander Cartney Wilton. The muscles around his mouth twitched sharply. Fear, stark and helpless fear, flamed in his eyes; fear, not for himself—not for his life, but for those unwarned ships and escorts charging down from the north.

*E-36's* backing motors had all but stopped her. Her slight negative buoyancy, counteracted by her planes when under way, was dropping her slowly downward.

No time to debate, no time to weigh chances of survival. Instinct, habit, guided him now.

"Ahead, switch!" he jerked with cold, fatalistic decision. "Full fields!" He hesitated just an instant, turned to Seaburn: "Get Carter with his flags!"

One chance—one little chance that he might get a warning off to the convoy.

"Take her up!" he snapped to the coxswain on the wheels. Up she started. Instinctively his eye went to the periscope just as it broke through.

"Blow one and——"

He broke off suddenly, stiffened with a convulsive jerk.

Across the water, not two hundred feet away, his eyes beheld two tubes rising out of the sea—thin, gray tubes, with an arched window at the top.

"Steer five!" Tense, hoarse, his voice. A second's pause. "Steady—I'm ramming!"

Too late the enemy caught the other periscope. His eyes had been too tightly riveted on four big hulks bearing down two miles away, with two destroyers charging in vanguard zigzags.

A crunching, grinding jar. *E-36* heeled heavily to port. Her steel snout had plowed half through the enemy just abaft his conning tower. In desperation he started blowing tanks. He rose heavily, carrying *E-36* surfaceward.

"Blow the buoyancy—the auxiliary!" cried Wilton. "Destroyer—coming down on us! The torpedo hatch!"

Hands flew. Valves whirled. Air hissed through the lines. Water boiled out of the tanks.

*E-36* had broken water and shown a glistening blob in a surge of white in that instant the hard-hit enemy had struggled to rise. And now, as she came up by her own intent, something happened.

From the foredeck of the nearest destroyer flashed two sheets of yellowish fire. With a howling scream two shells ripped down close by. The conning tower lifted up out of the ocean. An instant later her back hove out of the sea, water pouring down the sides.

Frenziedly Wilton struggled with the conning-tower hatch.

"Quick!" he yelled. "The flags! A piece of cloth—anything!"

Out of the hatch he shot, with others on his heels.

Wildly he waved a dirty undershirt at a three-funneled monster charging down with flashing guns. Eyes on the destroyer had caught the true nature of the submarine, but too late to stay four hurtling shells.

Two struck the water. The other pair shrieked down upon their target.

Two jagged flares of fire. Two thun-

derous, tearing bursts. Clouds of water, smoke, and chunks of steel flew skyward from the after end of the English submarine. Men plunged from her decks into the sea. The destroyer swept alongside, frantically backing on her engines. Boats shot down her sides.

**S**AILORS of his majesty's transport, *China Sun*, swarmed excitedly around the members of the rescued crew of *E-36* that rested somewhere on the bottom of the North sea near by her sunken enemy. They plied them with questions, uttered exclamations of praise and awe.

Old Blakely, the chief engine-room artificer, sauntered out from a cabin passageway. His borrowed clothes were ill-fitting, but they possessed the virtue of being dry.

With deferent steps he edged up to Lieutenant Fenwick, also in borrowed raiment, coming out on deck with two ship's officers in blue and braid. He saluted.

"Please, sir," he questioned eagerly, "and 'ow's the captain?"

The navigating officer regarded the enlisted veteran with a comradely eye. "Not bad, Blakely. A bit delirious yet. Keeps raving about refit. The surgeon thinks he'll be quite all right in a day or two—just a wicked nick on top of his head. Ought to give him three weeks ashore."

"Deed, I'm glad it's no worse, sir," responded the grizzled old engine-room veteran with genuine sincerity. "'Pon my word, I thought 'e was finished when I saw 'im in the lifeboat." He paused, half sighed. "'E will 'ave all the luck, I guess. The rest of us'll all be chucked aboard another boat. No refit for us. I was 'opin' to——"

"To take a run up to Devonshire, eh?" finished Fenwick with a slow, friendly smile. "Just so happens that one of the big ones from admiralty is aboard this ship. From what he's hinting, I think the whole lot of us will get a day or two. Maybe you'd best not mention it to the others just yet."

The weathered old chief hastened away to hunt up his mates. Good news travels fast.



# The "Nanshan's"

By P. M. Mongan      Skipper



Native crews can prove unreliable in an emergency on the Yangtze.

**H**ERE is an unusual story of a sailor. It concerns a fellow named Gordon who committed suicide while in command of a small steamer on the Yangtze River. I was on the river when he shot himself, but I knew him only slightly. In fact no one on the river at that time knew him well. He had been in command of the *Nanshan* less than a month when one of his Chinese quartermasters found him dead in his cabin.

I met Gordon for the first and only time one evening in the dismal Customs Club at Hankow. Looking back now, I find all my recollections of him are gloomy. First of all the club in which we met was gloomy. It was a big dingy room, with a bar in one end and a billiard table in the other. A

few tables and chairs, a wall rack of billiard cues, a rack of those dry-as-dust British newspapers published in China, and a rug here and there completed the equipment of the club. An oil lamp swung from a rafter over the bar and another over the billiard table accentuated the drabness of the place.

Gordon was seated at a table near the bar with Olsen, the skipper, and Madden, the engineer, of a river steamer. Two customs officers were dispiritedly playing billiards. That air of waiting for something which seems to pervade all the customs clubs scattered up and down the Yangtze was in evidence when I entered the Hankow club this evening. Two Chinese "boys" were slouched on the bar, waiting

to serve the next drink, one of the customs officers was waiting to take his next shot, Gordon was waiting for his ship, and Olsen and Madden were waiting for him to open up and tell them something about himself.

I knew Olsen and Madden and I joined them at their table. Olsen introduced me to Gordon, and, as I shook hands with him, the thought flashed through my mind that here was a man who had seen plenty of trouble. The look in his eyes attracted attention and puzzled the beholder. He had fine, deep-set, gray eyes and an unflinching gaze, but they gave one the impression that he was afraid of something. The same sort of look that one sees in the eyes of a man being forced into a fist fight which he hasn't a chance in the world of winning. A sort of well-go-ahead-and-swing look. He was a tall wide-shouldered clean-cut man with the face of a scholar, and although he was only about thirty-five his hair was almost white. Olsen, an old busybody, was trying to pump Gordon, but he had the knack of keeping his own affairs secret without seeming to evade questions.

He gave us the impression that he was an experienced sailorman who had been in ships in all parts of the world since boyhood. He said just a word of a ship here, a master there, and a port somewhere else; nothing of his own affairs, but enough to stamp him as a deep-water man. He had just arrived in China and had been hired in Shanghai and sent to Hankow to take command of the *Nanshan*. The *Nanshan* was a small run-down steamer of about five hundred tons, engaged in carrying whatever she could get in the way of a cargo between Hankow and Ichang. His taking command of the *Nanshan* was evidence that he was either down and out or that he was not overparticular in his choice of jobs. The *Nanshan* had been commanded in the past by rum hounds at the end of their tether. She had a Chinese crew.

**A**BOUT two weeks later the following appeared in the *China Coaster*, a British newspaper published in Shanghai. I keep the clipping in my scrap book.

CAPTAIN OF RIVER STEAMER FOUND DEAD  
IN HIS CABIN. FOUL PLAY SUSPECTED.

When the S. S. *Nanshan* arrived in Ichang yesterday the master, Captain Gordon, was found

in his cabin, shot through the temple. Shortly before her arrival in Ichang the *Nanshan* rammed and sank a junk manned by river pirates who have been firing on river steamers of all nationalities during the past several months. It is feared that the Chinese crew of the *Nanshan*, being in sympathy with the pirates, took revenge upon Captain Gordon after he sank the junk. All members of the *Nanshan's* crew are being held at Ichang to await the outcome of an investigation.

A word of explanation is necessary here concerning the foul-play remarks, pirates, and detention of the crew. The Ichang port authorities arrested the *Nanshan's* crew on general principles. The port authorities belonged to that class of Europeans in China who persist in believing, in spite of all kinds of evidence to the contrary, that everything connected with the Chinese is mysterious. Every time a booze hound or a hop head drops dead with an overworked heart out there, which is quite often, these people immediately start searching for the mysterious Chinaman in the case. And most of the time when these same people are talking of river pirates they mean rebel soldiers. A civil war has been going on out there for a good many years, and lots of the skirmishing is done along the upper reaches of the Yangtze river—most of it above Ichang, which is a thousand miles upriver from Shanghai. This junk which the *Nanshan* rammed being below Ichang was something out of the usual.

There is always more or less shooting going on above Ichang, and every once in a while a shower of bullets rattle against a passing ship's side. Once in a while a rebel general will stop a river steamer and demand tribute; sometimes it is given, other times not, depending upon how badly the ship wants to proceed. If the tribute is refused there are no hard feelings engendered anyway. As regards the shooting, no one who has been on the river any length of time pays any attention to it. The ships doing business above Ichang usually house their bridges with sheet iron and let it go at that. There is no danger as long as a man keeps under cover, as no attempt is made to deliberately pick any one off. At the time the *Nanshan* rammed the junk she hadn't been fired on at all for the reason that she was nowhere near the war zone.

Gordon's death was the main topic of conversation up and down the river for

about a month. No one except a few members of the *Nanshan's* Chinese crew knew what actually happened on board that ship before and at the time Gordon shot himself, and Chinese crews don't talk to investigators. But these Chinese crews have their own system of underground telegraphy, and one told the other, and another told a few words to a master here and another a few words to a mate there, and these words were afterward pieced together in the various clubs and bars along the river. This is about what happened according to the masters and mates who compared the gossip they had picked up from the Chinese.

The *Nanshan* was nearing the end of her four-hundred-mile run from Hankow to Ichang shortly before dusk. She was breezing along nicely about twenty miles below Ichang, with Gordon on the bridge and a Chinese quartermaster at the wheel, when a big Chinese junk was sighted dead ahead. The visibility was bad, not enough daylight to see properly nor yet dark enough to make out lights distinctly. The junk was loaded down with rebel soldiers who were milling around on her excitedly because she was out of control. The spring freshet was at its height and the river was running about seven knots.

The only motive power the junk had was furnished by four long sweeps. These were of no avail. The river had taken the junk in its grip and was sweeping it downstream broadside on, with the soldiers frantically hauling on the sweeps in an attempt to bring her head around. The *Nanshan* held her course and plowed through the junk as if she had been an orange box. Over a hundred rebel soldiers, screaming for help which was not at hand, were swept away to destruction. The Chinese quartermaster who had the wheel of the *Nanshan* at the time of the collision is supposed to have said that the collision could have been averted, but that he waited for an order from Gordon to change the ship's course, and that Gordon never gave the order.

Shortly after the collision Gordon left the *Nanshan's* bridge, and then the Chinese quartermaster heard a shot fired. He called the lee helmsman and he went into the captain's cabin and found Gordon stretched out on the settee with a hole in his temple and his .45 clutched in his right hand. The quartermaster brought the

*Nanshan* to anchor and signaled a French gunboat, coming down river, for a doctor. The French doctor went aboard the *Nanshan* and pronounced Gordon dead by his own hand. A junior officer was sent over from the French gunboat and he took the *Nanshan* into Ichang.

**A**BOUT a year later I was holding down one of the big leather chairs in the Astor Buffet in Shanghai one afternoon, when a friend of mine named Daniels, who is skipper of a China Navigation steamer, came in. He was accompanied by a stranger to me, who had sailor written all over him. I hailed Daniels and he and his friend joined me at the table and I was introduced. Marden was this man's name. He was skipper of a big freighter plying between Liverpool and the East. After the "boy" brought the drinks we began talking shop and Gordon's name came up. Marden had been shipmate with Gordon, but hadn't till then heard of his death. I told Marden all I knew concerning Gordon's suicide, whereupon he made the following remarkable statement, "I always felt that he would do away with himself sooner or later." When asked why he felt that way he told this story.

"I was chief officer of the *Gaelic* at the same time Gordon was second of her. The *Gaelic* was in passenger service at that time running between New York and Liverpool. One night when the ship was approaching the English coast she ran into a heavy fog. Gordon had the watch and he called the captain. As the ship was still in the open sea the captain decided not to slow down, but the usual procedure of sounding the fog siren at half-minute intervals was followed.

"The captain had just stepped into the chart house to fix the ship's position when the *Gaelic*, breezing along at twenty knots, crashed into a Spanish passenger liner. The *Gaelic* struck the Spaniard right amidships and she sank with all on board in less than fifteen minutes. The Spaniard had a crowd of women and children on board and as she foundered their screams could be heard above all else. The collision happened so suddenly and the Spaniard sank quickly that by the time the *Gaelic* got her lifeboats over the side it was too late to save life.

"There was a board of inquiry held in

Liverpool at which Gordon and the *Gaelic's* skipper were given a clean bill of health. While the *Gaelic* had not slowed down, which was not usual in the open sea, she had been sounding her fog siren and had heard no other, so it was inferred that the watch had been asleep on board the Spaniard.

"Now the average young sailorman after having come through a shipwreck or a collision for which he was in no way to blame usually proceeds to forget about it and to thank his lucky stars that he didn't lose his life. While we were in dock in Liverpool getting our bow patched up, Gordon got moody. No one paid any attention to that at the time, but afterward we remembered it. Gordon's actions on the next trip of the *Gaelic* showed that he had lost his nerve. Three times during one evening watch when the ship was nearing Fire Island in a haze Gordon swung the ship and signaled for full astern to the engine room to avoid collision with imaginary vessels. After the third false alarm the skipper asked the ship's doctor to look Gordon over. The doctor said that it was a bad case of nerves and suggested sick leave.

"Gordon stayed ashore several months and then tried it again, but the same thing happened as had happened off Fire Island. As soon as the ship ran into thick weather and he had the bridge alone he swung the ship in a circle and had her backing full speed. This time he wasn't given any sick leave—he was fired."

Marden paused here to recharge his pipe and to order another drink. As soon as we had said our healths and good wishes, he continued.

"The company's shore doctor took an interest in Gordon's case and after much questioning of Gordon the doctor brought to light the fact that Gordon had been in a collision at sea as a child. It seems that when Gordon was a little tot he had gone on a picnic on a houseboat somewhere along the coast of England, and that when the tug came to tow the houseboat home some one on board the tug had got his signals mixed. The tug crashed into the flimsy houseboat and sunk her and out of the fifty or more children on board the houseboat only half a dozen were saved. Some one had reached down and yanked Gordon out of the water while most of the children were drowning. Gordon had been too

young at the time to realize the seriousness of the affair, but the picture of the screaming, drowning children had been impressed upon his mind just the same.

"The shore doctor claimed that the collision of the *Gaelic* with the Spaniard had revived all the terrors of the childhood collision for Gordon, and that this mental picture was what made Gordon terrified at the prospect of another collision and, consequently, made him take those unnecessary steps to avoid one. The doctor told Gordon that there were two ways to deal with his obsession—one way to avoid contact with anything which could possibly bring it to mind, which meant his leaving the sea, the other was to embrace every opportunity to give it battle, going on the assumption that familiarity breeds contempt. Although Gordon still had his ticket no one would hire him as an officer, therefore, the doctor's second method was out of the question. Gordon refused to leave the sea and he shipped as an able seaman in sail.

"He wandered around the world, going from ship to ship and becoming more bitter all the time. He couldn't or didn't want to tell his story to his shipmates who knew that he had once been a liner officer. So they furnished their own reasons for his descent and, as is usual in such cases, all their reasons were wrong. Gordon became a lonely man. The captain of a beef boat down on the River Plate who knew Gordon's story and sympathized with him shipped him as third mate, but it was no use. His sense of an impending collision was still with him. Another captain up on one of the lakes in Canada did the same thing with the same result. Finally he wound up out here.

"You say that the Chinese quartermaster of the *Nanshan* said that the collision with the junk could have been averted if Gordon had given the necessary orders?" Marden asked me at this point.

"That was the gossip along the river at the time," I answered.

"Well, I believe the Chinaman was speaking the truth," said Marden. "That fits into the conclusions I've come to as to why Gordon shot himself. This is only supposition, of course, but it satisfies me. I believe that when Gordon took command of the *Nanshan* he had just about determined to conquer his obsession or else do away with himself, and this is how he



went about it. The Chinese quartermasters of the *Nanshan* had been on her on her river run for so long that they knew every anchorage and every landmark and could, therefore, be trusted to steer the ship without any orders from Gordon.

"He decided to rely upon his Chinese quartermasters absolutely. When this vision or delusion of a collision came on him he decided to stand fast and let the Chinese quartermaster handle the situation. What he failed to take into consideration, however, was the fact that while the Chinese quartermasters were letter-perfect in routine matters they were helpless in an emergency. If the Chinese quartermaster had been alone on the bridge he might have avoided the collision, although I doubt it. But with Gordon on the bridge the quartermaster didn't dare do anything without an order from Gordon. The Chinaman

was a product of our system of training, which is based on the assumption that to obtain perfect obedience in routine matters it is necessary to discourage initiative.

"You can imagine Gordon's state of mind when the junk showed up dead ahead of the *Nanshan*. One more false alarm here and he would have been laughed off the river, to begin his wandering anew. The Chinese quartermaster held the ship to her course, waiting for a word from Gordon and Gordon stood fast, leaving the whole thing up to the Chinaman. In my opinion, Gordon gave up the struggle then and there and went into his cabin and shot himself."

We were all silent for a few moments after Marden finished his story. Then I voiced the thought that was in my mind. It was, "That supplies a motive for his suicide all right."



# Near Mona Passage

## By John T. Rowland



### Modern piracy in the West Indies.

#### CHAPTER I.

**W**HEN the tern schooner *Ezra L. Perkins* towed out into Long Island Sound from the lumber dock at Stamford her skipper supposed that he was bound for City Island for orders. This would probably mean, as he knew too well, a long and tedious wait, for charters were scarce and the season late. His owners—whom he sometimes cursed for a lot of old women—would rather keep him swinging round his anchor, with no crew aboard, than run the risk of a voyage that might show red figures on the balance sheet.

All of which was very disquieting to Henry Baldridge: Coming, as he did, from a long line of Nova Scotia shipmasters, there was rather too much of the sea rover in him for modern life. Moreover, he had cleaned up during the War in about the only way in which that could be done without loss of self-respect, namely by carrying munitions to France at the imminent risk of his life. On one voyage alone his

wages and bonus had amounted to ten thousand dollars, and the port authorities at Brest had paid all his personal expenses and presented him with a handsomely engraved memorandum for his valued services, to boot. So now behold him at the age of thirty-five, the possessor of medals from three governments and an unlimited license for all oceans, and yet with nothing better to do than serve as ship keeper in a fine, smart vessel condemned to spend most of her time fast to the bottom. Somehow it made Baldridge wish he had never gone to sea.

The Tug *Triton*, of Bridgeport, cast him loose off the Cows, and Baldridge made shift with the aid of his cook and a couple of hands shipped "by the run" to put sail on the vessel. Since the wind was fair and the distance short, most skippers would have contented themselves with easing up the Sound under their lowers. But Baldridge *liked* to sail—it was at once his vocation and his hobby, and wherever he was going, he wanted to see the schooner

doing her best. In this she seldom disappointed him, for she was a sharp vessel, with lines almost like a yacht's, except that she had fuller beam and greater power to carry sail when it blew. Mightily it tickled Baldrige in his voyaging up and down the coast to come upon some gilded yacht hove to in a northeast gale, making wretched weather for her seasick crowd of pleasure-seekers, while he stormed past her under three full lowers with a cargo under hatches and never so much as a drop of water on deck. Indeed, cargo was to the *Perkins* what ballast is to a yacht; the more she had of it the better she sailed, and the knowledge that she was doing useful work made her skipper all the prouder of her turn of speed.

So now he drove his dock rats to set topsails, and when they—being lazy and independent, with no interest in sailing as a sport—left the main topsail hanging like a bag, with its halyards slacked off and the clew six feet from the peak of the gaff, Henry Baldrige put his wheel in a becket and eased down the poop ladder into the waist. One of his men was sprawled on the main hatch, enjoying a smoke, while the other indolently made a coil of the topsail halyards.

Baldrige had come with every intention to speak them fair, even to give them a bit of blarney, if need be, since the occasion was scarcely one for battle, and besides, he would have them under his command for only a day. But the sight of that lazy, red-headed rogue sprawled at his ease while the vessel sailed with her topsails slacked down like a bonnet set askew on the head of some frowsy wench, was more than his seamanly spirit could brook.

With never a word, he fetched the hulking ruffian a kick that fair lifted him off the hatch. And when the man leaped up cursing, he followed it with a smashing blow that flattened his nose. Still saying no word, but looking about him warily all the while, he ran in under the fellow's guard, took him in the belly with his shoulder, and pinned him against the bulwarks, driving the wind from his lungs and letting him drop, gasping like a fresh-caught fish, to the deck. And just in time, too, for as Baldrige snatched a belaying pin from the rail close at hand, the other fellow was upon him with a blackjack in his right fist.

This one made a swing that would have

broken his skull. Baldrige ducked it, but as he did so, the fellow's toe flew up and took him below the belt, and Baldrige, suddenly sick and faint with an agony of pain, staggered backward and dropped across the man he had struck down.

His late assailant stood over him grinning. "Some bucko, you are, bo!" he said. "This job is goin' to cost you a t'ousand berries fer me and my pal to keep our mout's shut."

Receiving no answer, he fell to caressing the weighted bulb of the blackjack with his left hand.

"A straight case of self-defense on our part," the rogue went on. "Might as well do a good job——" He stepped forward, still grinning, and with his right hand raised.

Unable to rise from his knees, Baldrige shrank back. He knew very well that he had put himself in the wrong, since the law no longer recognizes a master's authority to keep discipline save by such weak-kneed methods as the docking of pay. To strike a sailorman, be he ever so impertinent and lazy, is nowadays a heinous offense, and to do so within pilot waters is perhaps the most foolish thing a shipmaster can do; since even at sea and in the face of mutiny and disaster a master may afterward swing for it if he enforces his commands by force. And yet landsmen wonder, when there is an accident at sea and passengers quite needlessly lose their lives, why it is that discipline is no longer enforced. Something of these thoughts sped through Henry Baldrige's brain as he crouched there on the starboard waterway, powerless to move, and cursing himself for a fool.

**W**ITH a leering grin, the big roustabout set himself to swing, but on the instant he began Baldrige saw a look of comical dismay come over his face as his eyes fell upon something apparently beyond the ship. He jerked backward, his knees doubled, and he tumbled in a heap. Simultaneously there came the sound of a not-very-loud report, like that of a small-caliber rifle. Seizing him by the hair and rolling his limp head so that his face could be seen, Baldrige beheld to his amazement a small, neat hole drilled in the middle of the fellow's forehead.

The other man had by this time got

his wind. "Tony's shot!" he gasped, looking round to see from whence the bullet might have come.

But he, too, was in a recumbent position, unable to see over the high bulwarks at his back.

"On the schooner, there!" came a sudden hail, apparently from close alongside. "Are you all dead? Stand by, somebody, to take my line."

Now, the *Perkins* was running along with her wheel in a becket, doing a good eight knots before a fresh easterly breeze. Baldrige was puzzled how a small boat might keep up with her, until, getting painfully to his feet, and looking across the rail, he saw a man's head on a level with his own and heard the whirr of a motor in a swift launch. Before he could look farther, however, the bight of a line fell over the rail, and instinctively he seized it and made it fast. Then two hands gripped the cap rail and the man's shoulders and finally his whole body appeared as he scrambled aboard. Sitting astride the bulwarks, he reached down to help some one still in the launch. The climb was a stiff one, for the schooner was flying light.

"It strikes me," said Baldrige, frowning, "that you're making yourselves mighty free——"

But the words died in his throat, for over the bulwarks climbed one of the most striking young women the captain had ever seen. She sprang lightly to the deck and stood facing him, hands thrust into the pockets of her leather jacket, and head tilted back, a whimsical smile upon her lips and the very devil of adventure flashing his signal lights from the depths of her violet-blue eyes. She was not beautiful, exactly, yet there was that about her to make a man catch his breath.

Baldrige stood dumb as any clam while this astonishing young person swept the schooner's long deck with her eyes—eyes which seemed to kindle with an enthusiasm that was almost fierce. Turning to her companion, who stood watching her with a half smile upon his lips, she caught her breath sharply and made a quick, expressive gesture with her hands.

"You are right," she cried, "this is it! This is the very ship!"

The man nodded and turned to Captain Baldrige with a broad smile. So far nei-

ther of the strangers had so much as glanced at the dead man or at his mate, who, sitting with mouth agape, stared up at them as he might at some one from another world. His experienced eyes did, however, note a bulge under the stranger's coat just abaft the right hip.

This was a youngish-looking chap of affable mien—tall, slender, and yet with a powerful frame. But what struck Baldrige most forcibly was the odd contrast between his engaging smile and the curiously alert quality of his keen gray eyes. Of both the man and the woman it might have been said that their outstanding characteristic was an intense aliveness, such as one finds only in creatures who live very close to the brink.

"I say, captain," the man remarked, "you must think us awful cheeky to come climbing aboard you this way. But it couldn't be helped, you see. I wanted to make sure my shot had done the trick."

"What the devil made you do it?" Henry Baldrige blurted out. "I suppose I ought to thank you for saving me a bad beating," he added in an apologetic tone.

The other made a motion as if to wave the apology aside.

"It was really very simple—though a bit unexpected, I'll admit. We were out for a spin, and happened to see you making sail. Something about the vessel attracted us, and we ran down to get a better look. This schooner is certainly a beauty—such as I've dreamed about for many a long day; far more attractive to my eye than any yacht. We played round her for almost an hour, I guess, but you were too busy making sail to notice us. We saw the slovenly way the topsails had been set, and were just talking about it and thinking how it spoiled the appearance of the vessel when we saw you leave the wheel to stare up aloft, and then put the top spoke in a becket and start for the waist. Something in your gait told us there was going to be fun. But we had also seen something else, something which was hidden from you."

He turned now and stared deliberately at "Redhead," who still sat with mouth agape.

"Stick your mitts up," he commanded in a voice like the crack of a whip.

While the supposed sailorman obeyed and Captain Baldrige looked on amazed, this surprising stranger stooped down and

thrust his left hand inside Redhead's lumberjack coat. His right hand meanwhile hovered in the vicinity of his own right hip.

A moment later he had straightened up and turned back to the captain. "Right-o!" he snapped toward Redhead. "Your teeth are drawn."

"Well, I'm blowed!" exclaimed Baldridge, staring at the neat little holster and bulldog revolver, of heavy caliber, but with the muzzle sawed off short, which the stranger had produced from the inside of Redhead's coat.

"We saw him show this to his mate while they were standing hidden from you behind the belly of the sail," the young man went on. "From their gestures we gathered they did not hold you in any great esteem. Whether the thing was a deliberate holdup, or this bird was merely telling his pal what would happen if you got gay, we could not, of course, tell. But when we saw you heading for trouble it looked as though we ought to stand by and see you through."

"And mighty good for me that you did!" Henry Baldridge said with fervor. "It isn't often a chap has guardian angels standing by him like that. This bird here would have shot me, like as not, if I hadn't knocked the wind out of him first. But say, why did you *kill* the other bimbo? That makes things kind of hard!"

The tall young man's smile increased. "My dear captain," he replied suavely, "you forget that I was some distance off in a small boat. All I could see of him as he went at you was his head and his hand with the club. The bulwarks hid all the rest of him from view."

"Then why didn't you yell? That would have stopped him till you got aboard."

"I did shout, but no one on board heard me. The ship's noises and the wind drowned my voice."

"Good Lord!" cried Baldridge. "Do you mean to say you were too far off to be heard, and yet you drilled that bird through the middle of the forehead with a pistol from a small boat under way?"

The girl laughed, and her companion grinned. "Quite correct, captain, except that I didn't use a pistol for that job. I used a very accurate small-caliber rifle, which I carry in the boat."

Something about the man's tone made a chill run down Henry Baldridge's back. It was a professional tone, such as sur-

geons might use in discussing an instrument for an operation.

"Often do jobs like this?" he asked—then wished he might bite off his own tongue.

"Not often," said the young man shortly. "And only in a good cause, when I do."

There followed an awkward silence. Suddenly bethinking him of the vessel, which had all this time been going with no one at the helm, the captain glanced ahead and saw that she had swung up two or three points off her course. With the true seaman's instinct, which always puts the ship first, he turned abruptly and strode aft to alter the helm.

When he reached the wheel and looked ahead once more he was puzzled to see Redhead and the stranger forward, easing off the head sheets. He was about to shout when the girl, who came strolling aft, made a motion to him to wait. She glanced overside to make sure the launch was all right, then climbed the ladder to the poop and stepped briskly up to Henry Baldridge, a bright smile upon her face.

"What a lovely schooner!" she cried. "And what beautiful weather for a sail! But it's too bad the wind will be against us going east."

"Eh?" said Baldridge. "We're not going east; we're going west, up to City Island at the head of the Sound."

"Oh, no, captain," the girl responded softly. "That would never do. Remember, you struck the first blow! Andy has a much better plan, if you'll just trust him and do what he says. He wanted me to ask you to let the vessel come up on the wind. Do you know, we've taken the most tremendous liking to this schooner?"

Baldridge's jaw dropped, and he looked from the girl's smiling lips to the depths of her indigo eyes, which remained unwavering upon his own.

"Hijacked, by George!" he muttered under his breath. Then he laughed as he spun the wheel and let the schooner's head come up to the wind.

"Will you let me in on it?" he asked. "Whatever your game may be?"

"Gladly, captain," the girl replied. "We guessed you were a good egg, from the start."

All this happened so quickly and with so little fuss that when the cook came out of his galley to bring the captain's dinner aft he stopped so short as nearly to drop the carrier.

He was a smallish man with a bright eye and a droll face. Arriving on the quarter-deck, he addressed Baldrige in a hoarse whisper: "Hey, cap, some looker! Who are they, and what is their game?"

"Blessed if I know, Mac," Captain Baldrige replied; "but you might set two more places at the cabin table. And come aft to take the wheel while we feed."

## CHAPTER II.

**B**Y the time the *Esra L. Perkins* had doubled Montauk Point her owners were beginning to wonder at Captain Baldrige's failure to report. Investigation developed that the schooner had left Stamford and was last seen standing westward up the Sound, and that she was not now, and had not been, anchored in City Island roads. Their conclusion was that Baldrige must have caught a tow through the East River, with the idea of anchoring on Red Hook Flats, from which place it is easier to get to sea. Quite to their surprise, they had been offered a paying charter for the vessel to load case oil at Mobile for South American ports, so that this imagined disobedience on the captain's part did not peeve them as much as if they were likely to lose money thereby.

Emory Pough, senior partner of Pough & Pough shipowners and brokers, removed the unlighted cigar from his yellow teeth and waved a stubby forefinger at the assembled office staff.

"Cap'n Teebo will be shovin' off from Eric Basin some time this forenoon in the *Martin J. Pough*. Get him on the phone an' tell him to keep an eye peeled for the *Perkins* as he tows down the Bay. He can send word back by the tug if he sees her."

"How long can you keep the *Perkins*' charter open for her, skipper?" Pough, Jr., inquired.

"Open?" bellowed his chief. "It ain't open; it's closed now! I signed it and mailed it last night."

"Still, the charterers would probably let us out if we called up and canceled it right now."

"Yeah—an' lose the first good payin' charter the *Perkins* has had since the War? Not much! We hold it. Vessels don't get lost between Stamford, Connecticut, and New York."

Nevertheless, that was precisely what

appeared to have happened to the tern schooner, *Esra L. Perkins*. Or if she was not lost, she was at least mislaid. This was somewhat due to the fact that Captain Baldrige, on hauling his wind, had beat eastward down the Sound in short boards, keeping close in to the Long Island shore. And he had further contrived to pass the lighthouses and coast-guard stations in the regions of Horton's Point, Plum Island, Fishers Island and Montauk Point during the interval between dark and dawn. So that by the time Pough & Pough were commencing to be really concerned about him, Baldrige, his vessel, and his crew of four, were making a fine, fair wind of it about one hundred and fifty miles off the coast.

The earthly remains of one "Tony," longshoreman and gangster, had been consigned to that deep where he would not lack for the company of his kind. This ceremony ended, Captain Baldrige had ordered the helm put up and the colors mastheaded once more, and proceeded merrily on his way. The course was east southeast, to intercept the trade winds some distance to the eastward of Bermuda, a necessary precaution on the part of all sail vessels bound to West Indian or Central American ports. Save, however, for what he might deduce from this course, Captain Baldrige had not the haziest idea of the vessel's destination.

That the ship was woefully short-handed could not be denied. On the other hand, it seemed to Baldrige that, man for man, he had never had so smart a crew—and that went also for the girl, who was known as "Billie." She had amazing strength in those supple young muscles which swelled so gracefully under her close-fitting jersey. Baldrige never had to tell her a thing more than once, and under his tutelage she very soon became the best helmsman in the ship. Indeed, steering seemed to be her chief joy—of which she never grew weary. Watching her as she stood striving with the great wheel, a sparkle in her eyes and a radiant flush upon her cheeks, Henry Baldrige sometimes fell a-musing and forgot the errand that had brought him aft. More than once, too, he found it needful to assert his authority and order her peremptorily to turn the wheel over to her relief.

The really heavy work was done by a gasoline winch which the *Perkins*, like most

vessels of her type, carried stowed away under the forecandle head. So far, however, there had been little occasion to do aught but steer, since the wind held fresh at northeast and north.

As for Redhead, that nautical desperado followed at Andy's heels and watched for the slightest indication of his pleasure like a great, well-broken dog. He had found his master. Andy, with a whimsical humor which on occasion could be grim, had dubbed him "Johnny," and as Johnny he was thenceforth known.

Baldrige sailed his ship and waited for his "guests'" purpose to exhibit itself. In this he was but making a virtue of necessity, for he knew human nature too well not to sense the ruthless determination beneath the surface of their good breeding. For well-bred they were. He knew gentlefolk, and he knew the imitation, and that this pair were the genuine article he felt perfectly convinced. Andy appeared the sort of man who, if a pal crossed him, would eliminate the said pal with sorrow in his eyes and apology on his lips. But neither the one nor the other would interfere with his aim.

The relationship between these two puzzled Captain Baldrige from the start. They were not man and wife, and they gave no sign by look or word of being lovers. Their bearing toward each other was that of pals whose understanding was perfect. To the young shipmaster, whose life had been a lonely one, it seemed incredible that two such persons could live in so intimate a partnership without falling love. Once Baldrige spoke to the girl Billie of her "brother," and got a blank look; so that theory had to be discarded as well.

"They may not be from the same nest," he told himself as he sat staring over the sea, trying to put two and two together, "but at least they are out of the same brooder. Smooth as glass, and twice as hard. There's something they want, and they're out to get it—and no soft stuff stands a chance till they've gained their ends."

**M**EANWHILE the *Esra L. Perkins* followed her leisurely course, and the time slipped pleasantly by with an apparently endless succession of sparkling days and glorious, starlit nights, the small crew taking turn about at lookout

and wheel. Little Mac, cheery as any cricket, whistled in his galley, whence came at dawn such wonderful odors of bacon and fresh-brewed coffee that the morning watch became the favorite one of the day.

Then came a dawn when Captain Baldrige was wakened to look at a light in the east.

"There's no lighthouse out there," he grunted sleepily. "It's the morning star you see."

"Are there *two* morning stars?" demanded Andy, bending over him with a peculiar expression in his eyes.

That brought Baldrige tumbling out of his bunk in a hurry, and he choked back an oath to find the girl Billie on the quarter-deck when he stumbled up there half clothed. She gave him a sidelong glance and turned her back.

Baldrige stood a few moments shivering in the thin air, staring at the bright light, new risen from the sea on the weather bow.

"Only one thing it can be, mister," he croaked through chattering teeth; "Gibb's Hill light in Bermuda. But I'm blessed if I know how we got so far to the west."

"We do not want to be sighted from Bermuda, or to fall in with any of the steamers that go there," said Andy calmly.

"Course not. We'll run her off, since we can't weather it by more than five miles or so. Johnny," Baldrige called to the wheel, "let her go off southeast."

"That will keep her clear of everything, mister," he added.

"I'd rather you made it south, captain, if you will be so kind," the latter responded.

Baldrige shrugged. "I'm usually skipper—but have it your way. South, Johnny." Then he went below.

There could be no more sleep for him that night, though he had stood the mid-watch from twelve to four. Vaguely disturbed, he went to his room and got out his chart. While he stood there staring without seeing it, and trying to figure what was in the wind, he became aware of another presence. He turned sharply to find Andy, tall and saturnine in a long black slicker, at his back—also staring at the chart.

"This how you keep your watch?" blustered Baldrige, thoroughly startled. "If a mate o' mine did that I'd disrate him and kick him out of the cabin."

Andy's eyes never flickered, and he seemed not to have heard the reproof. "Captain," he said slowly. "did you misjudge your speed by a knot or two?"

"What do you mean?"

Andy smiled. "To be candid, did you intend reaching Bermuda after I'd gone off watch? The land lies very low, and it occurred to me that you might have hoped to get close in before we discovered where we were."

"And have you pinched?"

"Precisely. There is a naval base there, I believe."

Baldrige laughed. "There is, and the Limeys would like nothing better than to haul in a Yankee schooner and put all hands in the brig. It would kind o' make up for some of their rum runners we've put under hack. But where would that get me? As soon as Johnny there shot off his face I'd be shipped back to the States most likely, to stand trial for murder—along with you."

The corners of Andy's mouth had the suspicion of a twist.

"Will you give me your word this was not intentional on your part?"

"Absolutely. I thought we were a hundred miles to the east o' this."

The smile broadened as Andy extended his hand. "I'm sorry. In my position a man has to be suspicious, you know."

Having apologized like a man and shaken hands on it, he went back on deck to complete his watch, but when he was gone the skipper gave an involuntary shiver. "Watch your step, Baldrige, old son," he muttered to himself. "Either o' them swells would have dropped you without batting an eye. But how in blazes *did* the old Perkins come to be a hundred miles out of her track?"

That question proved easier to ask than to answer. As soon as the sun appeared he took its bearing to check his compass, but finding nothing out, he checked the courses and dead reckoning for the past forty-eight hours, since his last previous fix by celestial observation. Finally he reworked those sights, and still could find nothing wrong. Yet here the schooner was, a good hundred miles to the westward of her course.

All at once he looked up to find the girl standing in the doorway to his cabin. How long she had been there he could not have said.

"Find the offending decimal, captain?" she inquired with a disarming smile.

"No, Miss Billie. Everything's as right as a new gig, so far as I can see."

"It must have been the current. I was just telling Andy that at certain times there is a strong set to the southwest in the region outside the Stream, a sort of countercurrent to the Gulf Stream, in fact. And with all the east wind we've had, this would be a natural time to expect it. Perhaps that is what set us to the west."

"Very likely," said Baldrige, his eyes growing bigger and bigger while the girl was speaking. "I've heard tell of that countercurrent, but it is so uncertain that a fellow doesn't know whether to allow for it or not. By the way, are you a navigator, miss?"

"Why, yes; I learned to navigate the last time I came down here. It's great fun; I love to take sights!"

"Well, now, that's fine!" said Baldrige eagerly. "I'll make you navigating officer of this ship. Of course, I'll take a sight myself now and then, but you can keep the run of her and tell me if I'm anything out."

"Why, that would be splendid," she replied seriously. Then a whimsical smile tugged at the corners of her mouth, and the next moment, to Baldrige's amazement, she had come beside him and thrown an arm across his shoulders as he sat at his desk. He tried to get up, but she thrust him back firmly and without apparent effort.

"You're a perfect old brick," she declared, "and it's a shame to have to treat you like this. If we'd run foul of some crusty old sundowner it would have been different."

She gave him a hug, a pat on the shoulder, and departed like an autumn zephyr from the room.

Baldrige fell back in his chair, navigation forgotten. After a few moments he shook his head. "Well, I'll be shot to blazes!" he declared. "Now, *what* do you make o' that?"

**T**HE Perkins reached the Mona Passage, between Porto Rico and the Island of Haiti, without further event. A little below Cape Engano an inviting bay opened up, and Andy suggested that they run in and anchor to make a few "alterations and repairs."



Thoroughly mystified, for the ship was in perfect order, both aloft and aloft, Baldrige had no choice but to obey. He would have come to anchor well out in the roads, but Andy ordered him somewhat curtly to head for a small cove which lay on the northern shore of the bay, between two awesome cliffs.

Baldrige shook his head. "If you want to put her in there you'll have to do it yourself. I won't be part to wrecking the old girl."

At a gesture from Andy the girl sprang to the wheel. For a while Baldrige stood disconsolately looking on, expecting every moment to feel the shock of his ship striking upon a submerged reef. Then, as the suspense became unbearable, he ground his teeth and turned to go below. Halfway down the companion ladder he heard his name called, and he turned about to see Billie watching him with her whimsical smile.

"Don't worry, old dear," she called in a low, calm voice. "We've been in here before."

Despite this encouragement, the shipmaster paced back and forth across his cabin, glancing occasionally through a skylight to see the bright-green verdure of a tropical hill, suspended, as it seemed, very nearly above the ship. Presently the sea noises died, and in their place he heard the rustling fronds of palms. Then the vessel's booms creaked, as, relieved of their strain, she righted upon an even keel and drifted ahead, cut off from the wind by the high hills.

A few minutes passed, and even this gentle motion ceased. Then Baldrige heard the roar of an anchor chain running out, followed presently by the boat falls creaking. He had contrived to hoist his captors' launch in on deck, with tackles rigged from two mastheads and the hauling parts led to his winch, but the launching of it would mean a considerable labor, quite needless while the vessel's own longboat hung conveniently from davits over her stern.

There were steps on the companion stair, and little Mac, his cook's cap cocked jauntily over one eye, came whistling into the cabin. He was holding his apron at the corners, and Baldrige saw that it was filled with yams.

"Some place, skipper, this here! Ain't you comin' on deck to have a look-see?"

"How did those get on board?" Baldrige demanded, indicating the yams.

"Boatload o' natives alongside. Our friends seem well known down this way. They've lowered the longboat and gone ashore, taking Johnny." Mac grinned as he spoke the ex-gangster's name.

"Is there a town?"

"Just a string of huts along the beach. Half-breeds they seem to be mostly. Come up, skipper, and have a look for yourself."

Some faint hope of taking advantage of his captors' absence may have led Baldrige to comply. But the first glance showed him how visionary was such an idea. On three sides lofty hills hemmed the vessel in and cut off every vestige of breeze. She lay on a mirrorlike pool that reflected every detail of the nearer shore, where stood perhaps a dozen humble dwellings built of logs and thatched with palmetto leaves. Before them, on a pebbly beach, were frames on which nets hung drying, while a score of open boats, from long, double-ended ship's lifeboats, salvaged in all probability from some wreck, down to clumsy canoes, scooped out of a single log, were drawn up out of reach of the tide. The sun beat down warmly, and high up on the side of the hill trees rustled softly in the breeze.

On the beaches a few dusky individuals, principally the very old and the very young, stood watching with intense interest what was happening out upon the bay. There the *Perkins'* longboat lay, surrounded by a swarm of native boats manned by nearly the entire population of the village, who seemed all to be talking at once.

Baldrige watched them idly for a few moments, then shrugged his shoulders and turned to go below. But as he did so his eye caught sight of something at the head of the cove. There, careening on her side on the glistening white sand, lay a schooner yacht. Even from a distance it was evident that she had been stripped. Sails, gear, and boats were gone. Nothing remained but the bare hull and the spars. A clumsy patch on her exposed bilge showed where an effort had been made to repair the damage, done evidently by stranding somewhere along this rocky shore.

"So that's it!" the skipper muttered. "I wonder if they'll strip us, too, before we get out of here?"

"No fear," said little Mac, standing hard by. "These people are friendly to our pair. They all but kissed that man Andy's boots."

### CHAPTER III.

WITH its motor running, the longboat proceeded up the cove. The native craft all followed until it grounded on the beach beside the wreck. Looking through his glasses, Baldridge read the name on the vessel's stern: *Esperanza*. Where had he seen that before? Somewhere, it seemed to him, he had seen or heard it, and quite recently, at that. He lowered his glasses and tried to recall. And as his eyes moved idly about his own ship's deck, they came to rest upon the transom of the launch in which Andy and the girl had come on board. There it stood staring him in the face, *Esperanza*—in letters of gold. So this had been the launch to yonder yacht!

Baldridge gave a low whistle. His eyes narrowed as he studied again the scene on the distant beach—Andy and the girl looking up, as though inspecting the work done on the stranded ship, while a tall Negro, with many gestures, seemed to be explaining some particular feature of the job.

From them he glanced down the little cove, its narrow entrance all but hidden from seaward by the overlapping heads; and he had to confess that no secret rendezvous could be more cunningly chosen.

Perhaps an hour elapsed while Captain Baldridge sat in his cabin, lost in his own gloomy thoughts. Despite the friendliness of their manner, it looked as though Andy and the girl did not intend taking him into their confidence after all. He and his vessel were being used to further their ends, whatever those might be; but Baldridge had a shrewd suspicion that he was to be made an accessory without any benefit accruing therefrom. Moreover, there was a sinister atmosphere about this cove with its swarm of piratical-looking natives which did not please him at all. Adventure, even with a considerable element of danger, he would have welcomed gladly enough, but sneaking criminality was not in his line.

During the previous winter the press had recorded two or three mysterious disappearances of yachts in the West Indies,

but try as he might, he could not recall their names. He wondered—

"Hello, skipper! Thinking about your sins?" inquired a well-modulated voice.

Baldridge came out of his reverie with a start and scowled at Andy, standing in the door.

"No, about yours," he snapped. "How come that schooner yacht was scuttled in this place? What became of her people? I see it's one of her running boats you have for a launch. And say, I wish you made a little noise when you walk around!"

Andy raised his eyebrows. "My word, skipper—nerves! You want to look out for them." He glanced at his immaculate deck shoes and thrust one out so that Baldridge could see its sole. "Rubber, skipper. Not my fault if they don't squeak. As to your other questions, they can all be satisfactorily answered; but I thought maybe you'd do me the favor to look the *Esperanza* over yourself and give me an opinion on her fitness to go to sea. Doesn't look to me as if Miguel had done such a hot job. I'd have asked you to come with us, but you see, old man, you crashed off below in a huff when we were sailing in."

Baldridge glared. "Can't you tell if a vessel's fit for sea?"

Andy shrugged, and his face expressed polite pain. Yet there was something in his deep-set gray eyes which belied the look. "Perhaps," he answered calmly; "but I don't pretend to a professional knowledge like yours. And since we're partners in this venture—"

"Partners, hell!" Captain Baldridge roared, springing to his feet. "What sort of partnership do you call it when one partner doesn't know what the other's doing? Why, damn it, neither one of you has even told me your last names; this is a partnership like the fox and the goose! You hijacked me, and I'll obey orders so long as I know that smooth talk of yours is backed up with a gun. But as for partnership—" Henry Baldridge ended with a short, ugly and emphatic word which cannot be here reproduced.

During this outburst Andy regarded him with what might have seemed to a third person a keenly calculating expression. In the passageway without there came a quick, impatient step, as of some one desiring entrance to the cabin, but Andy thrust back his left arm, barring the way. Baldridge, however, noticed neither the one nor the

other. Striding back and forth across his room he said other things to the same general effect, but in even more emphatic language, and once he halted before the desk, in the top drawer of which his revolver still lay. But something, perhaps memory of that neat hole in the middle of Tony's forehead, made him think better of the idea, for he resumed his walk. When at last he had run down for lack, not so much of language as of breath, and half turned to face Andy, he discovered that young man looking at him sadly. If there had been the least quiver of a smile on his lips it was quite gone.

"We have had a reason, captain," he said slowly, "for keeping you in the dark. A very excellent reason, as I'm sure you will agree. If the ship was overhauled by the coast guard, it seemed much better for all concerned that you should know nothing about our plans. It would enable you to clear yourself of any complicity in the affair. And so far as the success of the expedition is concerned, there has been no actual need to take you into our confidence up to now."

Baldrige grunted, more mollified by the complete explanation than he wished to appear.

"Well," he said, "tell you what I'll do; I'll forget bygones, wipe that all out. And, of course, I'll go ahead and do as I'm ordered, so long as it doesn't involve murder, but only under duress. You can't expect me to take any stock in this cruise or do anything on my own initiative unless you open up and tell me what it's all about. Until you do that, any opinion I may give you won't be worth a tinker's dam."

"Why, captain, that's fair enough," answered Andy in a tone of great relief. "And now I'll tell you what I'll do. When you come back from inspecting the yacht I'll sit down with you and tell you everything about this party from A to Z. And if you don't want to carry on with us, we'll fix it up to let you out."

"With my ship?"

Andy hesitated, then he smiled and met the other's eyes. "I'll be square with you, captain, and admit that depends largely on how you find the yacht. But," he added quickly, speaking with a great earnestness, "I'm not afraid of your wanting to quit us, once you know what we are going to do. Come on deck now. I'll get you a boat."

BALDRIDGE was paddled up to the head of the cove by a native in a small canoe, the ship's longboat being absent on some errand at Andy's behest. He landed on the beach of white sand where the schooner yacht lay careened upon her port side. She belonged to that nearly extinct type of clipper-bow vessel, so much more handsome than the conventional knockabout model of the present day. Letting his eye follow the graceful curve of her water line, from high-arched cutwater to finely tapered stern, Baldrige was conscious of that sense of exaltation which a masterpiece alone can produce.

"A beauty, all right," he murmured; "and a smart sailer, too, by her lines. I wonder what dirty work brought her here?"

She lay at right angles to the shore, with her stern pointing seaward and her bowsprit among the palmettos that fringed the beach. Since it was obvious that the tide, which here rises but three or four feet, could not have floated her to this position, Baldrige cast about for the means by which she had been beached. He found it presently among the trees—a huge wooden capstan, crudely but ruggedly fashioned, with bars of ironwood twenty feet long, and a mass of heavy blocks and hawsers still lying in confusion where the shiftless natives had left them when the work was done. They had simply dragged her up the beach on her side, as a child might a toy boat, the hard-packed, fine coral sand doing no harm beyond the removal of a certain amount of paint. But at the same time it was anything but slippery, and the force required for such an operation with a vessel of the *Esperanza's* tonnage must have been colossal. This was further attested by the massive gear and the size of the capstan, whose twelve long arms might have concentrated the efforts of a hundred men.

This was all very well for beaching the vessel—incidentally, it seemed to explain why her skipper had come to this cove, where there was plenty of man power, at least—but how in the world did they expect to get her off? That would require a powerful steam winch in an anchored ship; nothing less would have the force or the holding power to drag her back into the water.

A great light dawned upon Baldrige with this idea. Of course—that was what

they wanted of his schooner—she had the winch, plenty of heavy gear, and two great anchors that would hold her firm against any pull. Moreover, her draft was light enough so that she could be brought close to the beach. Indeed, the *Perkins* appeared ideal for the job, and as Baldrige thought of it, he recalled that either Andy or his good-looking partner had exclaimed something to that effect the moment they set foot on her deck, though he had then no inkling of what was meant.

Baldrige grinned. So he had been hijacked to do a bit of salvage work for which the *Esperanza's* owner lacked the price to pay! And he would be offered a share in the ensuing enterprise—whatever that might be—to keep his mouth shut thereafter! It was a nice idea—very clever of Andy and his pal—but shipmasters cannot be fools, and Henry Baldrige began to have a shrewd idea that once the schooner yacht was afloat he would find himself suddenly *de trop*. It would be a case of "Thanks, old top, and good-by. We've got ours!" Unless they tried to tangle him up in some illicit dealing just to stop his tongue. But it would be only for that purpose, the skipper felt sure; and by the same token he determined if possible to keep clear. Better to take his medicine standing than to be played for a sucker as well.

But so far he knew only part of the story; the question as to why the *Esperanza* had been beached was still to be solved. This did not, however, remain a problem long, for Baldrige saw right before him half a dozen new planks which had been let into her exposed bilge to close what had evidently been a jagged hole. It was a nasty gash, just below the water line, and Andy's stock as a seaman rose materially in Baldrige's estimation, for being able to get her in at all. The repair work, however, did not elicit such praise. It was a pretty crude job. Heavy planks of some dark wood, perhaps the native mahogany, were fitted roughly, leaving gaping seams into which old canvas had been pounded and the seams payed with pitch. The planks were fastened to the vessel's frames with large spikes, whose heads protruded on the outside.

Baldrige wondered if these spikes had not split the frames. He determined to continue his examination on the inside, and see. Since the yacht lay careened far over

on her port side, he had only to walk round her stern and climb aboard over the rail. Indeed, the whole sweep of her deck was plainly visible from the beach on that side.

He stopped short with an exclamation of surprise, for instead of a natty deck of glistening white pine with mahogany skylights and hatches, set off with brass fittings, the one before him resembled rather the deck of a small freighter. Rough deal planks had been laid over the pine, and in place of a skylight between the two masts, there was a large cargo hatch, the cover of which had been partially removed to admit air and light to the hold. Only the main companionway on the quarter-deck remained, incongruously ornate in its utilitarian setting, to remind the beholder that this had once been a yacht—that and the handsome mahogany wheel, with oak quarter bitts and lignum-vitæ blocks for the main sheet. The spars were in place, and so was most of the running rigging, but the sails had been taken off.

With a sense of growing mystery, Baldrige climbed on board and peered down into the hold. As his eyes grew used to the semidarkness within he saw that there the transformation had been even more drastic. The vessel had been gutted—nothing of her original fittings was left. Between transverse bulkheads of rough planks, the main portion of her hull was no more than a large empty space like any old freighter's hold. He climbed down a rickety ladder and examined the place by the light of his pocket torch. If, however, he had hoped to inspect her frame, this was effectively thwarted by the heavy sheathing with which the hold was sealed.

Though innocent of paint, the place was immaculately clean. On the woodwork he could find not so much as a scratch, and, save for a heap of scrap iron at its after end, which seemed to have been placed there for ballast, it bore no sign of having contained anything at all. Whatever the cargo she had been meant to carry, it seemed to Baldrige quite evident that none had ever been taken on board. The accident to the vessel evidently happened first.

He gave a grunt of disgust. "A fancy yacht masquerading as a rum runner! Silly game, that; I don't want any of it for mine. I'll yank her off for 'em and turn her loose. And the first port she enters we'll have the consul libel her for sat-

vage. My owners will add a yacht to their fleet."

He climbed up the ladder, chuckling over Andy's stupidity. Well, amateurs were like that. They never stopped to study the law.

On deck he paused to relight a cigar, which, in the interest of investigation, he had permitted to go dead. He reflected on what he should report. The yacht appeared quite able to go to sea; the wood butcher had done a solid job, at least. It was just a case of getting her afloat. He would make his captors a proposition to employ the best of his seamanship and skill to get her off unscathed, provided they would agree to let him then go on his way.

As surety, he would demand that they quit the *Perkins* and take up their quarters on the yacht. He would ship two or three honest hands—if he could find them—from among the native crowd, and have everything ready to sail the moment the job was done. They would have their yacht, to use as they saw fit, but let them once show her cutwater in any consular port and they'd mighty soon find he wasn't such a fool. Again Baldridge chuckled, as he blew out a blue cloud of fragrant smoke.

"*Perkie*, old girl," he began, "you and I will soon——"

But he got no further, for, turning to salute the lady thus addressed, he beheld her in a most extraordinary guise. With two of her big sails already set, and the third rapidly climbing its mast, she was moving in a sedate manner out to sea! A dozen native boats towed her, adding their force to the fitful impetus of her sails, and a great swarm of men were plainly to be seen on deck, setting topsails and jibs and sending up the spanker.

With an incoherent roar the skipper sprang to earth and ran down the beach toward his boat. Or rather, toward where it had been; for no boat was there. It and its attendant dark-skinned pusher had gone. Sending his glance quickly up and down both shores of the cove, Baldridge's heart sank like the quicksilver in an old-fashioned barometer on the approach of a winter gale. All the boats in the place were clustered about the ship; there was not a one in which he could get out.

Marooned! Seventeenth-century buccaneer stuff in the year 1929! Heartsick

and with a great variety of disagreeable misgivings, Henry Baldridge stood on the beach and watched his ship stand out to sea. At length she passed the narrow entrance and caught a steady breeze. Her sails filled, and he saw the white froth of water along her run. Then she doubled the head and passed from sight.

A long time he stood, incapable of thought or act. The lengthening shadow of the western hill finally chilled him into motion. Turning wearily, he went back to the stranded schooner yacht, just as a landsman in similar circumstances would have made for the nearest house. Once again he climbed aboard, but this time he went, still mechanically, toward the companionway aft. The hatch was fastened with a rusty padlock, which, however, he broke without further ado. Pushing back the slide, he descended the steps.

It was musty and hot down in the cabin. That was Baldridge's first impression, but his second was a sense of pleasure which even his profound depression could not wholly submerge. This place, which was all that remained of the *Esperanza's* once sumptuous quarters, was such as to give any sailorman a thrill. In perfect order and completely appointed, from the navigation books in their rack to the telltale compass that hung on gimbals over the captain's bunk, it was as cozy a nook as one could wish—for all that it inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees.

On the top of a dresser Baldridge found a long envelope, and, on looking closer, saw to his amazement that it was addressed to him. Tearing it open, he carried the missive to the light which fell now somewhat faintly through the open hatch. But there was still enough so that he had no difficulty in reading the few lines, written boldly in a large hand:

DEAR GROUCHO: We have decided you are not the ideal partner for our little enterprise after all. This schooner is yours if you can float her. Take her and be blessed.

ANDY.

P. S. I knew, of course, that you would come snooping below.

For perhaps a minute Baldridge stood staring at the paper. He made a motion to tear it up, but suddenly changed his mind and tucked the letter carefully into his wallet.

"Now that," he said slowly, "is what I call a damn skunk."

## CHAPTER IV.

**N**EITHER the cabin nor the fore-castle, which he investigated later, provided anything resembling food, so Captain Baldrige took a reef in his belt and lay down to think.

However, this process seemed inhibited by the acuteness of his chagrin, for he was not only angry and worried, but very much put out with himself. It was all too evident that he had played into the hands of a very crooked crook, and his position—penniless and friendless, with only the clothes on his back, might prove anything but pleasant before he succeeded in getting back to the civilized world.

While he lay thus, a prey to disagreeable forebodings, Baldrige became suddenly aware of a stealthy tread on the deck above his head. He listened acutely, thinking at first that some prowling animal had come down out of the forest. Swinging his feet silently over the edge of the bunk, he sat with every nerve taut, and tried to recall something that might serve for a weapon.

The step hesitated a moment, then came on, with the unmistakable *pat-pat* of bare human feet, toward the companion hatch. Looking up from his dark corner, Baldrige saw the square of starlit sky suddenly obscured. In the space was silhouetted a huge torso and head.

The man crouched to listen, and as he turned his head so that his profile came in outline against the sky, Baldrige recognized Miguel, the giant mulatto who was uncrowned king of the cove. This was Andy's henchman, who had taken the lead in that rising pirate's conference with the natives. It was he whom Baldrige had seen through his glasses, pointing out his handiwork on the *Esperanza* in the manner of a street-corner orator haranguing the mob. With the brute strength of the African, the cunning of the Spaniard, and a dash of the savage Carib—than whom no native of America had a more ferocious name—these Dominican renegades were persons to reckon with, and this Miguel appeared to Baldrige the best of the breed.

The captain was not precisely afraid, but a sensation of hopelessness engulfed him as he saw himself cornered like a rat. Pressing his back to the wall, he waited in fascinated silence to see the glint of

moonlight from the giant mulatto's knife. Miguel lowered his head still farther, listening apparently for a sound from within. It seemed as though he wished to be certain that his victim slept. He was a coward, then! With the thought, Baldrige took a new hold on life. Perhaps the fellow feared that he was armed. And after all, why should he not be? So far as any one knew, he might have a pistol on his hip. He *did* have a flash light, and that might do nearly as well. Without a sound, he picked up the torch and flashed its beam full into the prowler's face.

The effect was astounding. For the fraction of a second Miguel stared, round-eyed with terror, into the dazzling light. Then his arms went up and he groveled on the deck.

"Señor, señor," he moaned. "Ah, *Señor Capitán!*"

"Well, spit it out!" Baldrige snapped. "What the devil are you doing here?"

Being unarmed, he would have no choice but pretend to be convinced by some fantastic excuse and let the man go.

"Señor!" said Miguel, gulping down the terror in his throat. "Do not shoot, *Señor Capitán!* *Yo vengo muy pronto.* Ver' fast I come with letter of la Señorita Americano on your ship. She say find *el capitán* right 'way queek. So Miguel come——"

"What the hell are you talking about?" Baldrige exclaimed. He was finding the reaction rather sudden.

"*Si, señor,*" Miguel emphatically declared. He fumbled in his scanty clothing and produced a square envelope, which he held out in proof.

Somewhat gingerly, for he still feared foul play, Baldrige reached for the letter, keeping the torch light playing on Miguel's contorted face. The dazzling light seemed to confound him more than some real danger would have done.

"Stay where you are—*attencion!*" growled the skipper in his gruffest voice while he seized the missive and retreated crabwise to the after end of the cabin.

Here he was safe to turn the light upon the letter, since Miguel could not even see him from the deck and could not come down the steps without exposing himself to the deadly beam. It was a fat epistle, and the envelope had been sealed in apparent haste and addressed in pencil in a hand at once feminine and strong. Tear-

ing it open, he plunged into its contents with a curious prickling feeling of the scalp.

There was no salutation or date, for reasons which the first sentence made clear.

"I am writing this in a great hurry to send back by Miguel before Andy catches on. There is a lot to tell you, which I can't explain now, but I'll give you the high spots and trust to your good sense.

"This expedition is not the result of any piratical venture nor was it unlawful, as originally planned. It is a sequel to the unfortunate effort made a year ago by Professor Burchard, of Harvard, to uncover the wreck of an ancient Spanish treasure ship supposed to have been sunk in a battle with Sir Francis Drake or one of his captains not far from this spot. Professor Burchard's interest was chiefly archæological, but others were attracted to the expedition by the love of adventure and the hope of spoils, among them one Reginald Anderson, a wealthy young New Yorker.

"Anderson had been a classmate of my brother's. The latter told me he was a bad egg, and opposed my going when he heard Anderson was one of Professor Burchard's backers. Of course, that was enough to determine me to go, as I don't let any of my family give me orders. So I came along with my paints and brushes to do the work for which I had been engaged. It meant possibly fame, and at the least, a year's livelihood for me. Anderson came, too, and behaved himself exceptionally well. We had a little schooner yacht, the *Esperanza*, purchased for the expedition; and we had reached our objective, located the wreck, and were all set to begin work when a strange thing happened. The schooner broke away from her moorings in the middle of a perfectly calm night, drifted on a reef, and started pounding there before any of us knew what was wrong.

"Andy was the first man on deck. He took charge and managed to get the vessel off. There isn't time to describe the means he used, so I'll just tell you that he got her around to the cove where she is now and saved her and all our lives—except possibly the captain's. Andy was so angry he drove the captain off the vessel that first night. The captain got away in

one of the boats and has never been heard of since.

"Our hopes were, of course, utterly dashed. We left the yacht in Miguel's charge and went home, going to Macoris in the launch and thence by steamer to New York.

"It was nearly a year before I saw Andy again. One day about a month ago he called at my studio and presented a plan to resume the treasure hunt, just by ourselves. He said Wall Street had cleaned him out, but that he had enough left to swing it if he could persuade some schooner captain to lend us a hand.

"I never suspected what form the 'persuasion, would take, but I must admit the prospect thrilled me, and I joined in the adventure with my whole heart. After that things began to happen—so fast, I seemed to be living in a mad sort of adventurous dream. I believed that we were going to employ your services and your vessel to float the yacht again; it never occurred to me that this man intended to turn pirate. But when he marooned you on the beach, he dropped his mask, and I want to warn you that he is utterly ruthless and without fear or mercy. Miguel crossed him, and Andy turned on him like a panther. The fact is, he is through with Miguel, and does not want him around. He wants only stupid fellows he can cow. Miguel is frightened, but also resentful. He is clearing out, and I have told him to get in touch with you. Together you may be able—— No more, Andy is coming below.

"Good luck.

BILLIE."

Baldrige had to read the letter a second time in order to gather its full import, and when he had done so, he sat amazed. Suddenly he sprang up and, striking a match, lighted one of the swinging lamps which still held a little oil. Then he called to Miguel to come below.

The latter complied with a look of keen expectation on his swart face, which had an alertness that contrasted strangely with his Negroid features. He was evidently a superior fellow in mind as well as in strength. The very fact that the yacht had lain a year in this place without being looted attested to the force of his leadership.

"Where is my schooner now?" Baldrige asked sharply.

Miguel spread out his great hands in a deprecating gesture.

"No name place, *Señor Capitán*; how can say? But I show you. You like go?"

"How far is it from here?"

"Twenty-five mile—maybe thirty. I paddle back since sundown."

Baldrige consulted his watch. "It's eleven thirty. We might get there before daybreak if you're not played out."

The black giant laughed softly in a low and singularly melodious tone. "Miguel never get tired," he replied.

The skipper had now a double purpose in wishing to regain his ship, a purpose which was not in any degree lessened by the girl's failure to ask for help. That was the thing that amazed him most. He knew people. There was no doubt in his mind concerning Billie, a high-spirited, modern young woman, intolerant of family restraints, who had embarked upon what she thought a perfectly legitimate adventure, to find herself mixed up in a bad business, the associate of a very bad man. When quiet fellows with deep-set gray eyes like Andy's go bad, they are likely to go very bad indeed. They will be, as she had said, utterly ruthless, bent only upon achieving their ends. To be trapped in such a situation, without possibility of escape, would in itself be torture to a girl like Billie. The skipper could not help smiling a bit at the thought that she was probably taking orders now for the first time in her sweet young life.

But the sense of her danger banished any amusement he might otherwise have felt on that score. There was no telling in what crimes Anderson might involve her. Already, by stealing the *Perkins*, he had committed an act of piracy, no less. And, worst of all, there was the personal side.

Some criminals prefer a woman accomplice because her loyalty is greater than any man's. Andy, who came from the same social stratum and knew her well, could not have been fool enough to expect she would turn criminal merely because he did—at least, not of her own free will. But in those last words of her letter Baldrige seemed to read the answer to his riddle, one which had been puzzling him ever since the man came aboard his ship with this fascinating young woman, to whose charms he appeared so cold. Once or twice the skipper had surprised a fleeting look in his

eyes which had given that coldness the lie, and now it seemed plain that the whole thing had been carefully plotted from the start. A bad one, this Anderson, and as deep as he was bad. While avoiding any appearance of interest in Billie, he had gotten her so enmeshed in a web of criminality and so deeply compromised that she had no alternative but to cast in her lot with his, not merely for this adventure, but for life. Because, as Captain Baldrige perceived, Billie was not a young lady for half measures. Should she become convinced that return to her old life was out of the question and that she had no choice but to be a modern pirate's side-kick, it would be like her to throw herself fully into the business and drain her cup to its dregs. In this connection, too, the skipper had to confess that Andy was by no means an unattractive person—which admission caused him a curious sense of pain. The chances were that Andy's very ruthlessness, of which Billie now complained, would be attractive to her, as to most of her sex, once she beat her scruples down.

There was just one good feature about the situation, and that an important one: the girl probably was not in any immediate danger. That would not be Andy's line: he would prefer to let circumstances seem to encompass them and thrust them as if by fate into one another's arms. Still, there was that line in Billie's letter about the dropped mask. Had she meant to convey a hint of peril without openly asking for help? It was quite possible, in a young woman of her spirit and pride.

It seemed that the situation called for action, but not for precipitate haste. Baldrige dismissed his first idea of going with Miguel to the schooner and having it out with Anderson then and there. In the first place, he was unarmed, and in the second, it was extremely unlikely that they could take Andy unawares. He was no such a fool. Baldrige would merely be putting his head quite needlessly into a trap. The sensible thing, so far as recovering the schooner went, would be to have Miguel paddle him to Macoris and get help. Why, he wondered, had Andy left him at liberty to do such an obvious thing?

The more Baldrige thought of it, the more he became convinced this was the only course, but when he broached it to Miguel the latter looked dubious and shuffled his feet. It would be necessary, he



explained, to paddle steadily for two days and nights, and by that time they might be too late.

"How do you mean, too late?" demanded the skipper, contracting his brows in a frown.

"Señor André is not like the old one; he cares nothing for guns and swords or old pieces of plate. He wants only the chest containing jewels and gold."

Baldrige gave a start. "Are there such things?"

Miguel nodded. "When we were there before I went down and found the old ship. She lies between two walls of coral, where she has rested all these years as in a dock. I walked along her deck and went into the great admiral's cabin, where they told me the treasure would be kept. It was dark in there, but I had my torch. With its light I found an old chest, *Señor Capitán*, and after some trouble with the fasts, because it is not easy to use tools under water, I got it open at last, and saw——"

He paused in an attitude of wonder, which mere recollection of the sight sufficed to evoke. Glancing sharply up, Baldrige saw his eyeballs rolling and beaded sweat standing on his brow.

"Well, what was it—a snake?"

"No. *Señor Capitán*, a thousand times no! Such things as I never dreamed of—pearls the size of big white grapes that come from the Azores, other jewels that I know not how you call. Gold and silver in all shapes, and much more that I cannot even tell."

Despite himself, Baldrige felt the goose-flesh rising along his spine.

"You saw that—and left it behind?"

"*Sí, señor*. All but one pearl, which I brought up."

"Did they all see it—all who were on the yacht?"

"No, *Señor Capitán*. Miguel is no fool. I hid it in my pouch and showed it to the old one and Señor André later in their cabin, when I had taken off the suit."

"You were in a diving suit, then?"

"Yes, señor. The water on the wreck is deep."

"What became of the diving outfit after they all left to go home?"

"I kept it in my shack. Night and day it has been under my eye."

"Good Lord!" cried Baldrige, and the exclamation came from his heart.

There was silence in the cabin while the full significance of the half-breed's words sank in.

"Señor André promised before he left," Miguel continued in a low voice, "that he would return. He said he had arranged things with the old one. I would bring up the jewels and the things the old one wanted, and he would give me half of all the precious stones and the gold. So I kept everything as he left it, and now—he kicks me out like a dog."

"Gosh!"

"Señor, it is the truth. 'You have served my purpose, Miguel. Go, before I fill your black hide with lead instead of gold. Other men will dive as well for less pay.'"

## CHAPTER V.

**T**HE black man stopped as though fearing to trust his voice. His chest was heaving, and his eyes had an expression partly savage, partly hurt. Baldrige, studying him closely, thought the pain predominated. But he knew that presently it would change into hate unalloyed, just as good cider turns into vinegar if allowed to ferment. He determined to hasten the process.

"So," he said slowly, "you found Andy's treasure for him, you helped him save his vessel. You repaired it for him while he was away, guarded his gear at the risk of your life when you might have used it to make yourself and all your people rich as kings. Then finally, when there is no more he can use you for, he kicks you out, not like a dog, Miguel—dogs where I come from show their teeth if they don't dare bite—but like a rabbit, a big, frightened rabbit. You savvy, *coneja*? He has plenty of strength to run away, but none to stand up for his rights! Pshaw, Miguel, I think he served you right!"

Without a word in retort the big fellow hung his head.

"You fool," snapped Baldrige, "you're hurt because a man who is known as a damn scoundrel played you a dirty trick! What else could you expect?"

"Señor," muttered the half-breed, "I did not know."

"Neither did I, till he gypped me, too. But you don't see *me* looking like my best friend had died. It's all you can expect from birds like him. The thing is now to go to work and figure how to get square."

"Señor Capitán," said Miguel simply, "gladly would I cut his heart out and throw it to the sharks, if I knew how."

"Why poison a poor shark? It will hurt Anderson more if we get his stuff—and that will do us a lot more good."

Miguel smiled feebly, like one but half convinced. "Perhaps you are right, although it would please me more to see his blood spurt over the blade of my knife."

"Well, cheer up. I'm not saying you can't do that, too. But first we must save the ship and the girl—and collect the treasure for ourselves."

At mention of Billie—the first specific allusion either had made of her since the talk began—Miguel's swarthy face underwent a remarkable change. Every sign of hatred vanished, and a look almost of religious beatitude took its place.

"She needs no help of ours, señor. The holy angels will not permit one of their own number to be hurt."

The skipper gave a low whistle. "My word! Miguel, you ought to be writing poetry instead of diving for pearls. But don't be too sure. We may be the instruments the Almighty figures on using to accomplish His ends."

"Señor, that is true. It is said that even the devil is sometimes of use."

"I think he is," said Baldridge, grinning. He studied this giant *mestizo* with an ever-increasing interest. It was not unusual to find poetic instincts in these mixed breeds, but generally there were weak points as well. This man, however, with his Herculean strength and fineness of soul, appeared an exception to the rule. Save for the simplicity which had made him an easy dupe he was a better man, the skipper admitted, than himself. But that sophistication which the latter had gained in the rough and tumble of life was the quality most needed in their present state.

"You and I have the same game to play, Miguel, and between us we ought to make things interesting for Friend Andy. The only question is how. That will take a little study, and there are two or three points that aren't clear to me yet. How did you come to be on the yacht when they located the wreck, and what interest did you and your crowd here have in the venture?"

"Señor, it is a long story you ask me, but I will try to make it short. First, I should tell you that I am not just what

you may think. My father was an octo-  
roon—nearly pure Castilian—and he did a good business in sponges down on the Margaritas. When I was a child he sent me to the holy fathers in Cartagena for my schooling, wishing to recompense me, as he told them, for the blackness of my skin. I stayed there until I was twelve. Among other things they taught me the English language. Much I have forgotten, but it comes back a little when I speak.

"One day in the *librario* I found an old book with a map. It was a secret record of Spanish treasure ships sunk by the English pirates. Some had been run ashore, some foundered at sea, and others sank in waters near the shore. The last interested me most, because I was acquainted with diving on account of my father's trade. All but one were in places where they must have been broken up by storms long ago, but that one, I thought, might still be whole, and the water was too deep for any but a trained diver to go down.

"I studied the writing and repeated the bearings until I knew them by heart. They were compass bearings on an old Spanish fort and a hill with a sharp peak. The chart showed where these lay on the Isle de Hispaniola, which, señor, was the name of this land where we are now."

Baldridge nodded. "So you ran away and came here to find her!"

"Not right away. At the age of fifteen I went back to help my father. For a while things went well. Then my father died, and I found it hard to carry on the business because of my black skin. Clever white men took my money away; in a few years I was just a common diver. But I was young and strong, and I loved the excitement of going down into the sea.

"Then one day the will came on me to find this treasure. If I had to live by diving with only my knife to fight devil-fish and sharks, I would dive for something worth while. So I took a little money I had hidden and came here.

"The people in this cove were friendly, but I soon found that they were not good. Many struggles I had to keep to the fathers' teaching, and I might have fallen, but that I must be strong and clean in order to dive. So gradually they came to be afraid of me and I had no trouble any more.

"The first thing I did was to buy a little boat. In her I sailed down the coast and found the landmarks mentioned in the old Spanish record. The fort was a ruin, but the sharp-pointed hill could still be seen above the palms.

"A great disappointment lay before me—where the two bearings crossed was water far too deep to dive. This puzzled me, too, because the old writing said that the tops of her masts were visible after she sank; but I thought that the ocean bed must have changed.

"So I gave up and went to sea. One day when I was taking a trick at the wheel I heard the *capitán* cursing his chart, which was an old one, because the compass bearings were no longer right. This was the first I knew that the directions of the compass change. I asked him to tell me about that, but he got mad and told me to mind my steering. So I had to wait. One day, while the ship was lying in Cal-lao, I looked down through the cabin window and saw the captain studying his charts. No one was on deck, so I slipped down and crept silently up behind him. He turned suddenly and tried to escape, but I hugged him in my arms and held him till he stopped struggling. When I let him go he was nearly purple because I had shut off his wind so he could not yell."

Miguel smiled somewhat whimsically at the recollection.

"That was a very frightened skipper, señor. If I had been a murderer he could not have been worse. When I explained what I wanted he could not seem to understand, but at last he got his wits and gave me the information that I needed—how much the compass had changed here in Haiti in three hundred and fifty years. He thought I was crazy, and fired me the next day."

"Can't say I blame him," Captain Baldridge said, chuckling.

"It was very comical, señor. After that I worked my way on different ships clear round the world before I got back at last. All my money was gone. I had not enough even to buy a little boat.

"One day before that, while I was deck hand on a big passenger steamer, I heard an old gentleman with a white beard telling a lady about old things he had found. I told him about my treasure ship, because I wanted to hear what he would say. He

got so excited that I knew it must be very valuable indeed. But I would not tell him where she was, although he offered to pay me well. I said, 'You come some day where I live and I will take you out and give you all the old cannons you want, but bring a ship and a diver's outfit, because those things are too heavy to bring up by hand.' And I gave him the name of my cove.

"Well, señor, at last I got back, and after a time I got a canoe and an old compass and went out to hunt again. I found the coral reef and knew I was on the right track. After many days, going down in the deep water till my ears would ring, I came on the side of a ship. She was still there! But the water was so heavy I could not work without a suit. So I was no better off, after all.

"I will not bother you, señor, with how I tried to make money to buy the diver's outfit. I made the people work for me. We had some bad times—ayah!"

He lapsed into a dreamy silence while Baldridge fidgeted on the edge of his chair.

Miguel's face had grown suddenly stern. "I taught them to build canoes and boats, and took these to Macoris to sell—we did other things, too; not all so good, señor. Little by little the money grew, and then there came a great sickness, and I spent it all to get doctors and medicine for my people. Nearly half of them died. So I was back again to the start. And then, señor, one day a little yacht came to my cove and an old gentleman came ashore and asked for me. It was the old one I had told about my treasure.

"The rest, most of it, you know. He had the diving outfit and the vessel, while I knew the location of the ship. We made a bargain in his cabin—he and a young man, Señor André, and I, with the lady for witness. I was to have half of all we found. He was a good man, the old one, and I knew he would play fair. But something strange happened the first night we were anchored off the reef. There was no wind and no sea, and yet the yacht dragged her anchor and drove in upon some rocks, ruining our hopes. It broke the old one's heart. He lived, but I never heard him speak after that. Have I answered your questions, señor?"

"You have, and more," said Baldridge in a hushed voice.

There was a long silence in the *Espe-*

ranza's little cabin while the two men sat lost in thought.

Baldrige was first to speak.

"This treasure is yours, Miguel," he said, "if it belongs to any one on earth. And I am going to see you get it, by George! As for Anderson, he deserves to swing higher than Paddy's kite. It looks as if he even scuttled the yacht so as to get the old professor out of the way."

Miguel nodded. "That is my idea now. I did not think of it at the time."

"Naturally," said Baldrige, "being the kind he is, he would want the whole thing for himself. Having located the wreck and seen the pearl you brought up, his next move would be to eliminate the old man. So he paid the poor fish of a skipper to slip the vessel's cable during the night and let her drift on the rocks. I understand the skipper vamosed."

"Si, señor, that is true. He stole one of the yacht's boats and disappeared."

"Paid, no doubt, by Andy, to make himself scarce. And for that matter, it was not a comfortable position he was in. Then this handsome friend of ours cooks up a plan to come back and get the treasure, although in the meanwhile he's gone broke. Quite likely he waited till the old professor died—and I bet a dollar he put poison in his tea. And now here the damn scoundrel is with your treasure and my vessel, and an almighty fine girl—and if we don't look sharp, he's going to get away with all three. Miguel, we've got to put one over on him somehow!"

"Señor, I am with you—but how?"

Indeed, that was the question, and at the end of an hour's discussion of ways and means, they were no nearer a solution than when it began. Baldrige learned, however, that Anderson had taken practically all the able-bodied men belonging to the cove on board the *Perkins*, first making them give up any knives or other weapons they possessed. His right-hand man was the ex-gangster, Johnny. According to Miguel, the idea was to employ a large crew and remove everything of value from the wreck in a single day's work. Miguel had trained several of the stronger and more courageous men as divers for this very work, never dreaming it would be used against him in this fashion.

"To-morrow, as soon as there is light enough, they will begin," he said gloomily.

SEA-7

"You mean to-day," Baldrige retorted, with a jerk of his head toward the companion hatch. Already the sky outside had begun to pale.

"Señor, this is the day. It is now or never for me."

Something in his tone sent a little thrill coursing down the skipper's back. He was about to reply when both men were startled by a hail from the beach.

Baldrige sprang up on deck and beheld in the gray dawn a droll little man in apron and white cap standing looking up at the yacht.

"Mac!" he cried. "You're welcome as the flowers in spring. Did he kick you out, too?"

"He did that, the—— Not that I wanted to stay, except to keep an eye on that poor girl. But he told me to vamoze, and it didn't take the two guns on his belt to make me do that same. If ever I saw a bad eye in a man's head, that lad Andy has it. Mark my word, he'll have the treasure and the girl by this time to-morrow, and there won't be a man left to tell the tale."

Miguel groaned, but Baldrige's eyes narrowed as he stared at his old cook. "How will he do it, Mac? Do you know the plan?"

"His man Johnny told me; but what Johnny does not figure on is that he'll get it, too. He sent a boat ashore to some native moonshiner's dump for a cargo of this here chain lightnin' they make out o' cane. Soon as he has the treasure on board he'll start a celebration an' get all hands ginned up. An' it won't be just likker—he'll dope it to make 'em sleep sound. Then he'll scuttle the *Perkins*, as he done the yacht, only *this* time she'll sink with all hands. He'll have the girl and the swag in the ship's longboat and make his get-away in that. Johnny thinks he's going, too, but I don't. I say, skipper, have ye got a light?"

Mechanically Baldrige produced a box of matches and held them out to the cook, who had scrambled on board the stranded yacht.

"My word, Mac," he exclaimed, "no man can get away with wholesale murder like that!"

"The devil cares for his own. Have ye noticed there's a twister on the way?"

Baldrige looked at the sky. For the first time he became aware of the dull,

heavy atmosphere. He listened for the rustling of the palms, but they were mute, and the surf boomed with a curious hollow sound on the distant shore. Without a word he went down the companionway and looked at the barometer fastened to the forward deck beam of the hatch. When he returned his face was very grave.

Miguel sniffed the dank air and gave him a questioning look.

"Hurricane, *Señor Capitán?*"

Baldrige nodded.

"Now do ye see what I meant? That will cover all the traces," said the little cook.

It was plain that a hurricane striking the schooner *Perkins* in that unprotected spot would dash her on the reefs and destroy her in short order. And with her would go all the poor souls whose brains had been muddled by drink and dope. Furthermore, it was likely that no sign even of the ship herself would be left save a bit of plank and a spar or two washed up high upon the shore. If in the meantime Anderson had contrived to get away with Billie and a treasure chest in the ship's longboat and had reached shelter in one of the many little harbors along the shore, untenanted except for a few straggling native huts, he would indeed have things all his own way. Not a trace would remain of tangible evidence of his crime. The destruction of the ship would have been brought about by an 'act of God,' and he might even for Billie's benefit stage a frantic but unsuccessful effort to save her or some of her crew. The thing was satanic, and Baldrige found himself echoing Mac's sentiment that the devil does indeed care for his own.

"But wait, señor," cried Miguel. "How do you know it is *Satanas*? We have been helpless; maybe this storm is being sent to lend us aid."

"I'd like to know how," the cook retorted dryly.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE *Perkins'* sister ship, *Martin J. Pough*, under command of Captain Teebo, had made an auspicious passage south. She was bound to San Juan, which is on the north or windward coast of Porto Rico. But when off the entrance to the Mona Passage her skipper saw by the glass and the look of the sky that a

hurricane threatened. He doubted if there was time to make San Juan harbor before it broke, and he had no desire to be caught upon a lee shore; so he did the only sensible thing, which was to put his helm up and go through the Passage into the Caribbean.

He had run only a few hours along the coast of Haiti when he made out against the dark hills the masts and hull of another tern schooner in what looked like a precarious position. She lay two or three miles from shore in close proximity to some ugly reefs. Apparently she had only recently come to anchor, for her sails, while lowered, had not yet been furled. There was a familiar look about the stranger that intrigued Captain Teebo and made him study her long and earnestly through his glass.

At length, with eyes watering from the strain, he lowered the instrument.

"Mr. Olesen, come here and take a look at that schooner. See if she ain't got double triatic stays between the fore and main."

"Ya," boomed Mr. Olesen sonorously after a minute inspection. "Ay bane tank she have."

"By cricky!" cried Captain Teebo. "Do you know who she is? She's the *Ezra Perkins*, Pough's other vessel that they thought was lost, sure as I'm a foot high!"

"You bane six feet, almost, capt'n," corrected the conscientious Swede.

"Oh, hell, Olesen, that's just a manner of speech. But what am I to do now I've found her? Will you tell me that?"

The question was evidently rhetorical, for Captain Teebo did not wait for his puzzled subordinate's reply. Instead, he sang out for the steward to bring up his international signal book and spent the better part of fifteen minutes hunting a four-flag hoist that would come somewhere near expressing all the things he had on his mind.

"Are you in need of assistance? Will stand by, weather permitting," seemed to be as good as anything he could find, though the question was really all that meant anything, since it was quite evident the weather would *not* permit. Indeed, Captain Teebo begrudged every minute he spent under the land, and heartily wished himself out in the middle of the Caribbean, with hundreds of miles of sea room on every side.

And yet it seemed an awful thing to run away and leave that fine vessel to sure destruction—especially when she belonged to the same people who owned his own ship. So the unfortunate captain found himself in a position where he was certain to be blamed either for risking his vessel to no purpose, or else for doing nothing to save a ship owned by the firm. Whatever he did was wrong!

Something about the *Perkins*—perhaps the disordered condition of her gear—led him to believe that his signal would not be answered or even understood. Great, therefore, was his surprise when a string of flags fluttered aloft above the anchored vessel with scarcely a minute's delay. He looked them up in the book and read the appended meaning.

"Well, I'm blowed," he observed. "H'm, there's something mighty funny there, but I reckon it lets us out. Mister, be *sure* that signal is recorded in the log."

"Ya," answered Mr. Olesen, "sure t'ing, capt'in, ef you bane tell me what he said."

"He says 'Go to hell,'" snapped Teebo; "but not quite in those words. The exact meaning is: 'I have everything necessary to effect repairs, and do not require your kind offer of assistance.' Can you beat that?"

"Ya? Then for why don't he get under way?"

"*You* answer, mister. I can't! Baldridge must have gone bugs, if he's in her yet. But anyhow, we can beat it, thank Heaven!"

In this, however, he was not entirely correct. Although his course after passing the *Perkins* was such as to carry him out from land, he had gone but a few miles when the wind died, and with it the light went out. Night descended upon a calm tropic sea. To a casual landsman it would have seemed no different from any other beautiful night, but Captain Teebo did not turn in for his watch below. Every half hour he descended to the cabin to read the glass, and each time it stood appreciably lower than the time before.

"Ain't there no bottom to the thing?" he muttered nervously after the twentieth trip.

About midnight the stars went out as though extinguished by the throwing of a switch. A long ground swell of great amplitude gently lifted and dropped the schooner as she lay becalmed.

**D**AY dawned at last—pale and uninspiring—but still there was no wind. Through a curious coppery haze Teebo could see the hills of Haiti, scarcely a dozen miles away.

"Well, mister," he said, "I reckon we're in for it. Might as well get the vessel snugged down."

Still the looked-for gale failed to arrive. But about six o'clock, while all hands were furling sail, one of the men gave a shout and pointed ahead. In the southeast—out of the open sea—a huge wall of water could be seen approaching. It was like the regular ground swell grown to gigantic proportions, a huge, rounded wave sometimes erroneously called a tidal wave, that often precedes the coming of these severe tropical storms. It picked the *Martin J. Pough* up bodily, passed under her, and rolled on, majestic and unhurried, toward the land.

"Mister," said Captain Teebo in an awed voice, "we're going to catch hell. And us only twelve miles from the beach!"

It was at this precise moment that Henry Baldridge and Mac, the cook, stood on the *Esperanza's* tilted deck, wondering how the coming storm could be made to further their own ends. To both of them it seemed far more likely to cap the climax of disaster. Mac lit his stump of a cigar for the third time, while Baldridge stared moodily out to sea, cudgeling his brains for some kind of an idea. All at once he blinked and frowned, then rubbed his eyes hastily and looked again. The sea horizon—or that part of it visible between the two headlands—seemed to be rising slowly but certainly into the sky. He gave an inarticulate grunt and pointed. He heard Miguel catch his breath and saw the cigar fall from Mac's open mouth. While the three stood as though secured to the schooner yacht's deck, a moaning sound, at first faint with distance, reached their ears. Swiftly, however, its volume increased, until presently earth and sky and sea seemed to tremble in response to a terrifying roar. Sea birds rose screaming from their nests, and the fronds of palm trees lashed the still air. Then, on the crest of the swiftly approaching wave, a thin line of white appeared, and a crash of surf drowned every other sound.

There came the terrified yells of the natives as they scuttled away from the shore—women and children in the lead,

old people tottering as best they could behind. And then the wave entered the narrow gullet of the cove.

"Up the rigging, boys!" yelled Baldridge at the top of his lungs, and, waiting no longer, he sprang into the yacht's main shrouds and went up the ratlines like an ape.

What happened next none of them could very clearly tell. A waterfall seemed to sweep up the cove, a moving waterfall which perversely ran uphill. It picked the little yacht up and spun her about like a top, then flung her against the palms that lined the beach. For what seemed an eternity the trees held her imprisoned while the waters rushed and swirled past. From his perch aloft Baldridge looked down on the forest; he estimated that the "tide" had risen a good thirty feet.

Then, suddenly as it had come, the boiling current ceased, the noise died away, and the heaped-up waters started to move back toward the sea. At first, slowly, but with growing speed, the tidal wave reversed, carrying the *Esperanza* on its crest. However, this retrograde movement had none of the violence of the attack. It soon subsided, and when it had done so the little yacht floated serenely among a heterogeneous collection of wreckage and rubbish well out in the middle of the cove. So far as one could see, she was the only thing that had escaped unscathed.

"Gosh!" said Henry Baldridge as he looked around. With legs that trembled and hands that squeezed the very tar out of the shrouds, he clambered slowly down from aloft. When his feet were on the deck—a level deck now—he drew a deep breath and gave a rather low and shaky laugh.

"Come down, boys," he said; "it's all over—it's all over, and we've got the *Esperanza* afloat."

"Was I not right, señor?" called Miguel in answer from his own perch. "See, the storm is on our side, and this is but its first blow!"

Put a sailor on a ship, and that ship adrift, and there are certain things he will do if the heavens fall. In this case Baldridge's first act, a purely instinctive one, was to run forward and let the yacht's anchor go. Having thus insured her against drifting on shore, he cast a glance aloft at her naked spars.

Miguel intercepted the look. "I have

the sails and gear ashore, señor, where they were safe even from this."

"Then we'll go get 'em."

But that, as it happened, was not necessary, which was fortunate in view of the fact that they had no way to get ashore. Miguel gave a peculiar, shrill whistle which was answered in a few moments from the beach by an old man whom they had watched climb down out of a tree. A shouted dialogue followed, and soon the old man shambled off up a trail that led to higher ground, making the best speed of his shaky legs. He had, however, a powerful voice, which he did not spare, and the answering hails told that most if not all of the population had found refuge on the hill.

Miguel looked relieved.

"I reckon they all escaped," Baldridge said.

"*Si, señor*; the sails will soon be here."

"How will you get them out?"

Miguel grinned broadly, and made a gesture which said, "Wait and see."

"By the way, there's something I forgot to tell you," Mac suddenly put in. "Just before dark a passing vessel made the *Perkins* a signal. Anderson answered, and the stranger hauled her wind and stood off to the south'ard. I don't know what she said."

"Sail or steam?" asked the skipper sharply.

"A three-masted schooner of about the *Perkins*' cut."

"You don't say? She can't be far off then, because there wasn't any wind during the night."

"No. It will be a bad place for her if the wind strikes in from the south-west."

"Which it will, if I'm any judge. By cricky, here comes the first puff now!"

While Baldridge was speaking, the palms began to rustle down on the point. In a few moments the trees on the hilltop caught the breeze. A few big raindrops splashed on the *Esperanza's* deck; then the sky, already shrouded in vapor, turned still darker, and a furious tropical squall swept across the cove.

The three men took refuge in the cabin. In a few minutes the rain passed, but when they came back on deck there was no sign of clearing in the sky. Instead it was murky and dark, and the wind blew with a sullen intensity that gave promise

of worse to come. In passing, Baldridge stole a glance at the barometer, and the position of the needle sent a chill running down his spine.

"Wonder if Anderson has done anything?" Mac shouted in the skipper's ear.

Baldridge shrugged. "It wouldn't take half an hour to bring that chest up, once he got located and had the gear all set up."

The little cook leaned against the wind and settled the white cap more firmly on his head. "He can have it and drown with it, for all o' me."

"All right, Mac, but how about the vessel—and the girl?"

"They don't belong to me, neither. But I signed on with you for a voyage, and I won't go back on you now. Any idea what we're going to do?"

Baldridge slapped the cook's shoulder. "Good lad, Mac! Stick along and see."

Suddenly there came out upon the beach something that looked for all the world like an immense white centipede—a centipede which all at once lost its legs, as a score of women and children flung the long canvas rolls from their shoulders and began to run hither and yon like people gone daft. While Baldridge watched, greatly puzzled, a raft of sizable dimensions grew with amazing speed before his eyes. Tree trunks and logs, old casks and barrels, the ubiquitous oil tin, and wreckage from the houses, all went into it, bound together by ropes and fish nets and pliant creepers which the builders wove in and out without apparent plan, and yet with complete success. Wading out waist-deep, they pushed the raft clear of the mangroves and carried the sails out and piled them on board. Then half a dozen stalwart black Amazons bestrode the logs, and with bits of plank for paddles, set it in motion upon the cove.

Fortunately the wind was with them, or their efforts must have been vain. As it was, the raft crunched against the *Esperanza's* sleek side after fifteen minutes' hard toil. Then Miguel resumed charge. He was everywhere at once, and his vibrant voice was not still for an instant as he urged his helpers to greater effort and more speed. Half a dozen stripling lads had swum out, following the raft, and these swarmed aloft like squirrels, reeving the various halyards and lifts through their blocks. As for Captain Baldridge, he stood back with mouth and eyes open while

sails and ropes seemed to materialize out of the air. A dozen pairs of nimble arms and hands—not to mention feet—did in half an hour the work for which a City Island yacht yard would require several days.

"Set foresail and jumbo, mister," shouted the skipper when he had seen the last lacing tied off. "Rest of the gang heave up anchor. Mac, go forward and see they cat her up right."

Miguel, panting and sweating, but with eyes aglow, ran aft and took the wheel.

"I know the channel, *capitán*," he explained. "My people work well! I told them that we go to rescue their men."

"Oh," said Baldridge in the tone of one to whom a deep mystery has been explained. "But I can't take them along."

"No, they will leave us soon."

As the little schooner shot seaward past the heads, Miguel shouted something and waved his arms toward the shore. His dusky riggers picked themselves up, still panting, from the deck. Regretfully and with that in their eyes which smote Baldridge's heart, they waved him good-by and dived overboard to swim ashore.

"Begorra," said Mac, "we'll have to save those fellows somehow."

Baldridge looked grim. "We'll be doing well if we can get the girl."

Once outside, the yacht's scant sail proved more than enough. So quickly had the wind come that the sea did not have time to rise, and now the very force of the wind seemed to keep it ironed out smooth. Its blue color was quite gone, and clouds of spray drifted across its streaked surface like snow in winter across an open field.

As soon as the *Esperanza* headed down-shore, she drew the wind aft. Even Baldridge, who had recognized her for a smart sailer, was astonished to see how she went. At the wheel Miguel exulted as he steered. Catching the skipper's eye, he laughed.

Little Mac looked unhappy. His cap had been yanked down so that his ears protruded like a monkey's, and he wore a solemn look on his seamed face. He stared ahead, with left hand raised to the temple to shield his eyes from the driving spray. Once or twice he glanced back at the entrance to the snug harbor they had left. He knew, however, as well as the others, that it was idle to think of turning back. As well ask a fish to swim up Niagara Falls!



And this was only the first breath of the hurricane, a mere zephyr to what it would be soon. Sails and all would go then, and no human power could keep the little yacht from driving ashore. Her only hope—and theirs—was to get in somewhere before it reached that point. Casting a glance at the skipper's grim mouth and purposeful eye, Mac felt that he was the man to do it if it could be done. But equally he knew that Baldrige would not alter course until he accomplished what he had set out to do.

Just what that was, Mac did not know, and, to tell the truth, Baldrige himself had only a hazy idea. What he *wanted* was somehow or other to rescue the girl, capture the loot, if any, which Andy had abstracted from the ancient ship, and eliminate that too clever gentleman from the scene. He would like also to save the schooner *Perkins* and her dusky crew, but that appeared too much to hope for in the present state of things. If ever a ship seemed doomed to sure destruction, it was she.

Just how he would go about accomplishing his purpose, Baldrige did not know. He felt a sickening dread lest the *Perkins* had been swept from her anchors and carried ashore by the big wave; although Miguel's assurance that the water was deep lent hope that she had ridden it out.

Supposing that she was still in the same spot and unscathed, his plan of action must depend upon conditions when he arrived. That would not be for more than an hour, and almost anything might happen during a hurricane in that length of time.

*Esperanza* flew like a frightened bird. Now and then a point or island or outlying reef would loom for an instant through the sea wrack under her lee, to vanish almost before one could make it out. Yet Miguel appeared to recognize these guiding marks, for he shaped his course with the sureness of a seal. Of the towering hills that lay but a few miles back, nothing whatever could be seen.

Mac all at once came over to where the skipper stood.

"It's a queer thing," he shouted, "how this blow struck in from the southwest."

He alluded to the well-known fact that hurricanes usually start from the northeast and gradually shift around.

Baldrige gave a short laugh. "Maybe this one didn't know the rule. Ain't it breezin' fresh enough to suit you, Mac?"

"Faith, an' I'm not complaining. But the sky don't look right, either. And no wind ever made that big wave."

It was true that while the heavens were murky and dark there was no concentration of cloud masses in any one region. Baldrige himself was puzzled to account for that wave. Hurricanes do drive a swell before them, and frequently there will be a succession of seas that overtop the rest, just as in ordinary weather an occasional high breaker will roll in upon a beach. But even so, it was difficult to picture their heaping up such a mountain of water as that which had drowned the cove and set the *Esperanza* afloat. Nevertheless, the wind had actually attained very nearly to hurricane force, so the question seemed academic.

Baldrige shrugged. "They're freaky things, Mac. I don't know what—Hello! Miguel, watch out! On the weather bow!"

His shout came in the nick of time. With a startled yell, Miguel ground his wheel hard up as something huge, yet spectral, leaped out of the spindrift ahead. For a moment it loomed indistinct, like a motion picture out of focus, the next, while *Esperanza* rounded up sharply, this massive shape took form—a big vessel under storm canvas, driving dead before the wind so as to cross the yacht's bows. Five seconds more and the little *Esperanza* would have been smashed like an egg.

As it was, her bowsprit missed the big fellow's counter by inches. A frightened face under a big sou'wester peered down over the taffrail; then Baldrige was reading the name on the schooner's broad stern.

"*Martin J. Pough*—of Poughkeepsie!" he read aloud. "*Martin J. Pough*! Hey, Mac, tell me, have I gone nutty with the storm?"

"It's her, all right," yelled the little cook. "That was Teebo as looked down over her stern. And say, skipper, he's headed straight for the beach."

The words were wasted. Already Baldrige had rapped out an order to Miguel. The yacht swung off before the wind and closed in upon the three-master's quarter. In a few moments they were running side by side.

"Don't you know me, Teebo?" the skipper hailed. "I'm Baldrige, of the *Perkins*. You're headed for the beach."

"The hell I am!" roared the other, recog-

nition striving with amazement on his face. "I'm runnin' fer a little island in here where I can make a lee and run some lines ashore. The vessel may go to pieces, but I'll save my crew. What the blazes are you doin' in that?"

Miguel touched the skipper's arm. "I know the place. It is good shelter. But he cannot find the way in. There are reefs——"

"Can you?"

"Sí, señor. Many times——"

"Hey, Teebo," Baldridge bellowed, "my pilot says it's no use. Better haul up and run her for the Cape. By the way, have you seen my ship?"

Captain Teebo's ruddy face, framed by a halo of grizzled beard, looked the picture of despair. Suddenly it brightened.

"You lead the way in," he sang out. "The chart shows plenty of water between the reefs. Lead the way with your pilot and I will follow. We'll save one ship, anyhow."

"And let the *Perkins* drive ashore? No, thanks! I'm going aboard her."

"Then you better look sharp, you damn beach comber," snarled Captain Teebo. "I passed her standing out to sea an hour ago."

## CHAPTER VII.

**T**HE *Esperanza* made a violent yaw. Spinning on his heel, Baldridge saw that Miguel had dropped the wheel. His face had gone a dirty brown, and he swayed on his feet.

Before either of the two white men could do anything to prevent it, the little yacht slammed against the big schooner's high side. Baldridge sprang for her rail and scrambled like a cat. "Quick, Mac," he yelled over his shoulder; "follow me!"

He swung in over the taffrail and faced Teebo on his own deck.

"Captain," he said calmly, "put your helm down and trim aft your sheets. We're going to find the *Perkins* if it costs you your dirty yellow life."

"Hey, skipper." Mac was plucking at Baldridge's arm. "What are you goin' to do with the native—set him adrift?"

"Tell him to run for that island," Baldridge snapped. "He's getting a vessel out of the deal—and his life."

"Sure," mumbled Mac. "I'd swap places with him, if I knew how."

But before Mac could carry out his su-

perior's orders, the *Esperanza* swung the other way. They saw Miguel automatically right up the wheel, a dazed look upon his sickly face. Then the spindrift swallowed him, vessel and all, and he was lost to sight.

"Come, Teebo," Baldridge admonished, "look alive, or we'll be on a reef."

The latter responded with a sour glare, but gave the necessary commands. "I'm doin' this because it seems the only chance," he explained; "not takin' orders from you. And while you're in my ship I'll trouble you to keep your mouth shut. Captains who desert their vessels don't make any hit with me."

"No?" said Baldridge evenly. "Let me tell you something. You're master here just while you do what I say. Your crew know you are yellow, and that you'd have lost the ship and all hands trying to save your damn hide. Will they follow you or me if it comes to a pinch? Call 'em aft and ask 'em, if you like. Put it to the test! No? Well, then, do what I tell you, and *maybe* we'll come through alive."

The vessel had been rounding slowly toward the wind. Unlike the little yacht, she had left enough to face it and still go ahead. With the wind six points off the port bow, she steadied on her course and plowed ahead, her reefed sails filled to bursting and her lee bulwarks scooping foam from the frothing sea.

Baldridge noted with satisfaction that she was in excellent trim for such a drill, her sails and gear new and strong, and her cargo sufficient to keep her on her feet. He felt confident that before the hull suffered damage, her canvas would blow away.

Leaving Mac to guard the quarter-deck, he struggled forward against the wind to where a knot of sailors had sought shelter under the weather rail.

"How did the *Perkins* look," he inquired, "when she went by?"

The men grinned.

"Like Paddy's kite," said one; "flyin' high an' wild. They had reefed fore and main onto her and a couple of jibs. She was standin' out same as we are, close-hauled on the port tack. Can't be more'n ten miles from here now."

"See any of the people—to make 'em out?"

"They was a whole crowd o' natives all

over her, and a white fellow and a girl standin' aft. Leastwise, it looked like a woman o' some sort."

"Sure it was," a young fellow spoke up. "I spotted her all right."

"Trust Red to spot a skirt," another grinned.

"She done a queer thing," the lad named Red went on. "I waved to her and she waved back. Then I semaphored, 'Oh, you kid' with my arms, never thinkin' she'd catch on."

"Red was into the coast guard before he went to sea," another explained.

"Shut up, Mike, I'm tryin' to tell him somethin' queer. Well, sir, she signaled me to stand by; and then she waited till the guy beside her looked the other way. When he done that, she spelled out a sentence so quick I couldn't get it right off, and when I did, it was too late; though the 'Old Man' wouldn't 'a' had the guts to do it, anyhow, so that was just as well."

"What was the sentence?" Baldridge snapped.

"Keep your hair on, mister; I'm comin' to that. What she said was, 'Will you pick me up if I jump?'"

Henry Baldridge caught a deep breath. "Anyhow, she's still in the vessel," he said to himself. "Look here, boys; that girl is in a bad fix. That guy ran off with her and the schooner, too. He tricked me into goin' ashore and vamosed with the works. One of you run aloft and see if you can make out her masts anywhere over the top of the scud."

"Sure, I'll go," said Red. "This one ain't goin' to spill her sticks out yet a piece."

His progress aloft was slow and toilsome, for the wind held him flat against the shrouds. He reached the hounds at last and climbed up on the spreader, where they could see him hanging on with all his might. After a bit he started to descend. His feet scarcely touched the deck when Baldridge grabbed him.

"Well," he shouted, "did you see her? Speak up, man! Have you gone dumb?"

"Gee," panted Red, "if I'd 'a' known it was *your* girl I wouldn't 'a' bothered—riskin' my neck fer another guy's dame! Sure I seen her—the vessel—broad off the weather bow, five or six miles away. Seems like she must 'a' hove to."

"She isn't hove to," shouted Baldridge in his excitement. "She's light, and can't

go ahead any, while we can. At that rate we just about ought to connect."

He ran aft, the wind carrying him in great leaps along the deck. Captain Teebo was nowhere in sight. His mate, the literal Mr. Olesen, had taken over command in his stead.

"Where's the Old Man?" Baldridge blurted out.

"He's cracked," said Mac briefly. "Look below."

Baldridge sprang down the companion-way into the cabin. There, in the semi-darkness, for the skylight was covered, sat an old man, leaning upon the table with his head in his hands. His oil hat had fallen off, and a tangled mass of gray hair encircled the bald dome of his head.

Baldridge stopped short, swept by a wave of pity. He understood now why Captain Teebo always came ashore clean shaven and why he wore his hat in the owner's office. His lack of manners had become a firm joke—but old men are not wanted as masters. To look at his face one would have said he was not more than fifty-five. Baldridge knew there was no cure for Teebo's ailment—nothing but that merciful forgetfulness which comes at last to the aged. He turned to tiptoe out, and his eye fell upon the barometer fixed to the wall.

At sight of it he blinked and looked again. He approached and tapped the glass, to make sure the needle was not stuck. It quivered a little, showing it was free.

"Well, I'm busted!" he exclaimed. "Of all the freak storms!"

The needle pointed to 29.75, which is virtually normal.

"Now what the devil," said Baldridge, "do you make of that?"

"Hey, skipper, come up here when you can."

It was Mac's voice, in a tone of repressed excitement, and Baldridge took the steps three to a jump. He saw Mac's face like a wrinkled apple, staring at him with an enigmatic grin. Without a word the little cook pointed to the west.

Baldridge sprang up through the companion hatch and wheeled round to look, but he saw nothing except wind-driven spray. Again his eyes sought the cook's. This time Mac pointed up at the sky, and Baldridge, looking above the spume, beheld a window of blue in the west.

"It's over," Mac shouted, unable to hold in longer. "We'll be lyin' becalmed before dark."

To Baldrige's acute senses it seemed that the wind already had a different sound, so that now, at the very time when he had expected to see the vessel's sail start blowing away while the gale increased to a true hurricane, against which no fabric of wood or cloth could stand, he was conscious instead of a slight but perceptible lessening in its force. Meanwhile, the window of blue grew apace, and through it a great beam of light fell upon the dark sea. In the east a mighty rainbow appeared. One end of it seemed to rest upon the Caribbean, in about the locality of Miguel's treasure ship.

"I wonder," said Baldrige to himself, "I wonder if Andy got it up?"

Mac caught the words. "He didn't have time, skipper, the way this storm came up—this here was a tropical disturbance with an earthquake thrown in. That's what made the wave."

"Either that, Mac, or else we were on the outer rim of a hurricane—the center passing to the north'ard of us, and its track recurving out to sea. That would give us heavy sou'west winds, gradually diminishing in force. And the big wave may have been caused by the swell from the Atlantic meeting that from the Caribbean in the Mona Passage, outside our cove. Of the thousands of seas which must have met in that region, there may have been just two whose nodes exactly coincided, and that would cause the augmentation we saw. But the important thing now is, what will Mr. Anderson do next?"

"If he has still to get the swag, he'll go back as soon as the weather moderates; but if he's got it in the schooner, he'll keep on."

"Where to?"

"Any place where he can make a getaway. He'd be scared to tackle it on this coast with us hangin' around."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Baldrige thoughtfully. "You see, he doesn't know you and I are on this vessel, or that she belongs to the same people who own the ship he's in. So far as he knows, this is just a stray schooner, and he probably figures you and I and Miguel are drowned or else sittin' aloft in a palm tree, waiting for the waters to subside.

But one thing I hope is that the wind don't die out too quick, because the *Perkins* will run away from us when it does."

"Yeah," Mac mused; "she's light. If we do catch her, what do you figure to do then?"

"Lay her alongside and board her like old-fashioned pirates. Three of the lads forward look like scrappers. That makes five, with ourselves. I'll arm them with whatever weapons I can find in the cabin, and offer 'em a share in the treasure if they help me get Anderson—dead or alive."

"He'd be more convenient dead, if you're askin' me," Mac responded, with a shiver of distaste. "Between you and meself, skipper, I'm thinkin' that as a pirate I'd make a damn good cook."

Baldrige grinned. "Never mind, you're in for it now. We can't let that so-and-so get away with both the ship and the treasure—not to mention the girl."

"No," said Mac dryly; "don't mention her, then." He fell to musing, staring up at the gradually clearing sky.

**T**HE gale, however, was still far from being spent. It blew very hard, and stinging spray swept over the vessel in sheets, although overhead the torn clouds, like dirty cobwebs, were being swept away toward the east. Baldrige climbed the spanker rigging till he was clear of the spray. Dead ahead, and not more than three miles away, he saw clearly the masts of a ship.

He had been expecting to see the *Perkins*, but not so near. His first reaction, therefore, was jubilation; but this turned very suddenly into disappointment when he observed smoke drifting from the stranger. A few moments later it became absolute dismay as he discovered that what he had taken for sails was actually the tripod mast of a man-of-war. Moreover, she was steering a course that would bring her very close. Baldrige indulged in some rapid thinking. He realized that by this time the tale of his disappearance must have become a classic mystery, and that beyond doubt every ship of the United States navy and coast guard had been ordered to keep a bright lookout for the *Perkins*. Tern schooners were no longer so common as they once had been, and it was most unlikely that the commanding officer of this cruiser would pass two together without inquiring their names.

Oddly perhaps, Captain Baldrige felt keenly averse to having such an inquiry take place. He had a perfect defense as the innocent victim of an outrageous crime, who had done everything possible to regain his ship; besides which he could put Anderson behind bars and rescue Billie. Indeed, it seemed as if a kind Providence had sent this naval ship along just in the nick of time. Common sense and duty both warned him not to lose the chance, but inclination pulled strongly the other way. For a while the worthy skipper's brain was like the suffering earth under the feet of two teams in a tug of war—on the one side duty, and on the other certain instincts and desires which were no less powerful for being disconcertingly evasive. There was the treasure, to which he had no shadow of legal claim—a sufficiently concrete reason, to be sure, for not wishing official interference. But while Baldrige made no pretense of being a saint, he did know deep in his heart that mere lust of riches would not tempt him from the line of duty. The thing was more subtle than that. To tell the truth, his flesh squirmed at thought of the publicity which would be sure to follow. If not a crook, he would be made to appear something worse—a fool. Hijacked by a young society man and a girl, and marooned on a tropical island—he, a hard-boiled shipmaster!

No, it would never do. The same applied, perhaps with even more force, to Billie. Baldrige had the human insight with which wanderers on this earth are sometimes endowed, and he realized that she would rather face any indignity or danger than to be featured in the tabloids. In fact, he winced at the thought. No, by the gods of war, he would see her dead first!

And finally, in the background of all these impulses, lay the very human one of wishing to rescue beauty and subdue the villain. Every normal man has a hero complex, though he will not admit it to his best friend. And here was an opportunity to indulge it—a marvelous one indeed! To get back his ship, capture the treasure, conquer the villain, and rescue the princess, all at one fell swoop—what knight of romance ever did anything more sublime? Or more completely satisfying, from whatever angle viewed? The small boy in Baldrige screamed for his one

great day, and the trifling fact that he offered no constructive ideas for the accomplishment of his purpose seemed not to affect the case. That part of it he put up to Henry Baldrige, the practical, hard-fisted man.

This latter personality accepted the burden with a scowl and a sigh, his subconscious mind warning him that there was no escape. And having taken it on, his next thought was to act.

This brain cycle was accomplished in about a fraction of the time it has taken to describe it. It was complete, and Baldrige's mind was made up while his eyes still rested on the approaching cruiser. Her deck and superstructure were smothered in spray, but he felt certain she must have a lookout aloft. This lookout would see the *Martin J. Pough*, just as Baldrige saw the cruiser, and he would also see the *Perkins*—which was worse still.

Clinging to his windy perch, the skipper thought fast. No use trying to run away; that would only excite suspicion. The best bet was to stay put and let the cruiser hail him. Baldrige himself would answer, giving the *Martin Pough's* name correctly, but making up a fictitious one for the *Perkins* if the naval officer inquired concerning her identity, as he almost certainly would do.

At least, he would do so if he saw her or if the lookout had reported another sail vessel in the offing, which he naturally would. Of course. But what the dickens had become of the *Perkins*? Baldrige's eyes swung along the horizon, every moment expecting to pick up her telltale masts. A momentary hope seized him that she was hidden in a rain squall, in which case she might possibly escape unobserved. But there was no rain. Save for the welter of spume, which blanketed everything for a dozen feet above the surface of the sea, visibility was good. The wind, though but little diminished in force, blew now out of the clear. In a few minutes the sun itself would be out.

Mighty queer, thought Baldrige, he couldn't see his ship! Impossible for her to have sailed out of sight. When last seen she lay virtually hove to. Where, then, might she be hiding? As the obvious answer penetrated his brain it made him weak and sick. So much so that he had a narrow escape from losing his hold—and his life.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WITH trembling limbs—whose shaking was not due to his own close call—he slowly descended the shrouds. All the time his eyes kept searching the horizon, but in vain. Before swinging down from the sheer pole to the rail, he took a last look at the cruiser and saw she had changed course a trifle so as to pass astern.

In a sudden panic which had a cause just opposite to his previous fear, Baldridge sang out to the mate, ordering him to run the ensign aloft in the main rigging—a universal signal which signifies "Come alongside, I have urgent matters to communicate."

"For why?" queried Mr. Olesen. "Iss de odder wessel near by?"

"You damn squarehead!" Baldridge belated. "Do what I tell you, and do it quick!"

Mr. Olesen did not relish the look in his eyes. He obeyed—with unusual alacrity—while muttering that a madman on board was very bad.

Perhaps, however, his estimate of the other's sanity underwent a change when, with a sudden rushing roar, a huge shape materialized out of the mist on the port quarter. Craning his neck backward, the startled Mr. Olesen looked up at what appeared to be a warship's bridge. In this he did not err—it was. But before he could frame words to express his anger or surprise, Henry Baldridge had taken the cue.

"Three-masted vessel *Ezra L. Perkins* was hove to seven miles to windward of us, clearly visible from aloft half an hour ago. She has disappeared—must have foundered. Will you look for survivors, if there are any alive?" He got it out all in a breath.

A man in a gold-trimmed cap and pointed black beard, who leaned over the weather cloth on the cruiser's bridge, glanced keenly to windward and then back again.

"Certainly, captain! The *Perkins*, eh? My word!" Then, turning his head, he sang out some commands, and the huge fabric commenced slowly to glide astern.

"Hey, captain," Baldridge shouted, "I want to go with you; let me come aboard!"

Whether the other did not hear, or heard, but preferred not to be bothered, it was impossible to say. He merely waved

politely and the cruiser continued to back away.

Baldridge sprang up on the rail, estimating the distance. There was no chance to hesitate, or even to pause. With a mighty spring, he dived from the *Martin J. Pough's* stern and came up a few seconds later quite close to the cruiser's bow.

The commanding officer looked surprised and annoyed, but he barked an order, and boatswain's mates bellowed their commands. A rescue party ran out upon the forward deck with the necessary equipment. A rope with a bowline in its end splashed before Baldridge's face. He seized it and slipped the loop under his arms, to be yanked swiftly and summarily on board.

"Send that man up to me!" came in a peremptory voice from the bridge.

"Well, sir, what the devil made you commit this piece of tomfoolery?" demanded the officer when Baldridge had presented himself, still wet and panting, at the sanctum aloft.

The *Perkins'* skipper thought fast, not only for the present but the future. Above all, he must be prepared to protect Billie, if she was still alive. The thought sent a look of pain into his eyes. "My wife, captain; she's on the other vessel——"

"Oh, my word; that's too bad! How did you come—— But never mind now. Plenty of time for explanations. Sorry! Seven miles dead to windward when last seen, you said? Johnson, make standard speed, twenty knots, and ring it in. Post lookouts on the fo'c's'le head and the bridge, and send another man aloft. We'll soon know if there's any one left."

As the cruiser plunged ahead under the driving impetus of her powerful screws, the *Martin J. Pough* faded out like a ghost. Mr. Olesen and Mac were standing at the taffrail staring open-mouthed at the cruiser, and then she was gone. The former now was certain he had had a madman on board, and even little Mac was commencing to have his doubts. But Baldridge neither knew nor cared what they thought. His mind was intensely concentrated upon what lay ahead.

Straight to windward stormed the great warship, snouting through the seas that had commenced to spring up and slinging spray clear over the tops of her stacks. When she had run fifteen minutes, Baldridge began to fidget. The commander

gave him a quick glance and came over to where he stood.

"I'm going to run five minutes longer at this speed," he said, "and then, if we don't see anything, I'll slow down and start circling. If we still fail——"

"Boat on the starboard bow!" shouted a lookout, and at the same instant a man on the fo'c's'le head hailed the bridge and pointed out into the mist.

"Stop both engines," barked the commander. "Right rudder. Mr. Johnson, do you see what they mean?"

"Yes, sir, something low in the water there on the starboard bow."

Henry Baldridge leaned over the bridge rail as if trying to bring this object a few inches nearer.

"Keep back and you can see better," the commander grunted. "Spray won't sting your eyes so——"

"It's hers!" Baldridge cried as a small white boat, nearly full of water, drifted in under the cruiser's lee. "That's the *Perkins'* dinghy."

His voice seemed to choke as he stood looking down at this mute evidence of disaster.

"What cargo was your vessel carrying, captain?" asked the commander briskly.

"None. She was light."

"Oh, well, then it may not be so bad. She won't sink. Cheer up! We'll probably find her awash, with all hands perched on her bilge like gulls on a tidewater rock."

"Maybe," said Baldridge in a croak. He did not add that it was neither the vessel nor the crew about which he worried most.

"Some one will take care of your wife."

"Yeah—I'm afraid so. I mean——"

He stopped short to listen. The commander's eyes rested on him with a curious expression, but he was quite unconscious of their regard. From somewhere up to windward came the staccato cough of a two-cycle motor, somewhat muffled and asthmatic. He had spent too many hours trying to persuade that motor to run not to recognize its bark. Straight down the wind it came, and down wind, too, the boat must be approaching, for the simple reason that it could go no other way without being swamped.

Through a flaw in the wind the sound came suddenly much louder. The cruiser had practically stopped, and had turned to starboard so that her port side lay pre-

sented to the wind. Toward this steel rampart the unseen boat was heading.

Her peril was sensed by the commander the instant he heard the sound. He sprang to his telegraphs and slammed them both to "Full Speed Ahead." At the same moment the lookouts shouted. Dashing across the bridge, Baldridge saw to his horror a long, low hull, resembling a whale-boat in form, that came head on for the cruiser on her weather side.

He waited no longer, but plunged down the ladder from the bridge and rushed out on deck. The boat was near, less than a hundred feet away. In her stern a man stood erect, struggling with a long tiller. Blinking against the spray, Baldridge perceived that he had seen his danger and was attempting to sheer off. There was another figure in the boat, and a lot of gear.

The longboat turned slowly. It looked as though she would smash broadside against the cruiser's unyielding side. But the latter was moving, too, rapidly gathering way. So it happened that Baldridge found himself first trotting and then running aft along the deck in his effort to keep abreast of the boat.

Boatswain's pipes shrilled, and rescue parties turned out with ropes, lifebuoys and fenders. But the boat maintained a margin of a few feet from destruction. Glancing aft, Baldridge saw that the cruiser's stern was swinging to starboard.

"Good seaman, this old man," he muttered as he ran.

Arriving at the quarter, a sailor sent a line uncoiling through the air across the boat.

"Make that fast," shouted a petty officer, "and we'll haul you round on the lee side."

The cruiser's engines had suddenly stopped.

"Thanks," answered the man in the boat; "but we don't need your help." He tossed the rope's end overboard with a wave of his hand.

Baldridge stared with eyes starting from their sockets. The other occupant of the boat, he noted, sat throughout the excitement with back turned toward the cruiser, concealed within a yellow slicker and a sou'wester three sizes too big. One could not tell if it was a woman or a man.

There was no time to ask questions or even to think. The boat was just passing

the port propeller guard, which projected a few feet above the water line from the ship's side. A moment and she would be gone. Baldrige made the propeller guard in one leap and the boat in the next. His feet shot out from under him and he went down hard on his back. Suns and moons and shooting stars blazed before his eyes, there was a loud buzzing in his ears, that grew fainter and fainter—and fainter. And then everything was very still.

**W**HEN our alleged hero awoke, the first thing he felt was an awful pain in the head, the next was an almost equally bad one in his wrists. Raising these, and at the same time moving his head, with great difficulty, sufficiently to look down along the contour of his recumbent form, he saw through blinking eyes that his wrists were bound. Very tightly bound with some small line which cut into the flesh. His hands were purple, verging on black. He groaned faintly and let his head fall back.

"Well, precious, has our little mans come to?"

It was a sweet voice—a little too sweet, Baldrige thought.

He turned his head and tried to look up, but the sun smote him full in the face. He noted that it was low, slanting over the bulwark of the boat.

"Our big little mans tried to rescue pretty lady in distress," the sweet voice went on. "And get some nice, pretty stones to play wiv, too. *Such* a kind, brave little mans!"

From somewhere farther away a man's voice gave a snorting laugh. "And now he's going down to play with the sharks and devilfish instead," this voice added.

"Without any nice diving suit to keep out horrid water," purred the other.

Baldrige gasped and sat suddenly erect, blue-eyed and blinking.

"What the hell?" he demanded. "My heavens, Billie, have you double crossed me, too?"

"You fool," came in calm, icy tones, "do you suppose we'd let an outsider in on this job?"

"Gee!" said Baldrige, slumping against a thwart.

His eyes, gradually growing used to the glare, roved out across the sea. It was quite calm, with a moderate swell, on which the motionless boat alternately rose and

fell. Far in the offing he made out the tripod mast of the cruiser alongside something that looked like the carcass of a whale.

"Many people lost?" he inquired.

"I hardly think so," Anderson replied. "She went over easy, and they climbed up her side like cats. Your friend Johnny and I launched the whaleboat, in which Miss Ralston and the diving outfit had previously been stowed. Any other little points you would like cleared up?"

"What became of Johnny?"

"He preceded you to Davy Jones' well-known locker—by a previous arrangement, of which he was not informed."

Baldrige glanced quickly at the girl and surprised a smile on her lips. He shuddered and looked away.

"Then you haven't gotten the treasure?"

"Not yet," said Anderson, putting a peculiar emphasis upon the word. "However, we are well supplied with all necessities, and your coming along the way you did was really most accommodating. It would have been necessary for one of us to go down, but now I shall send you, instead."

"So I *will* have a suit to 'keep out the horrid water'—at first," said Baldrige, turning toward the girl. "But why should I do this for you when you tell me in so many words that you intend to kill me in the end?"

"Because you love life," Anderson replied. "You will do it as you have done everything I've told you to, on the chance that something may happen. See?"

Baldrige sighed. "I'm not so sure. I thought things were different—between you and the girl. "No"—after a pause—"I won't do it! You can go to hell!"

"So!" Andy said. He unshipped the oak tiller and stepped gingerly to the middle of the boat. "Captain, I grieve to tell you that this motor isn't worth a damn. The thing has conked out on me three times, and now I can't start it for love or sweat. We would like to get in to the land. There's an island that seems to have a little cove behind it, and I rather fancy that as a harbor for the night. Besides, that damn warship may send a boat after us if we rot around out here. Miss Ralston will free your hands, and you will go to work on the motor, as you probably know its peculiarities better than I."

The girl produced a sailor's knife and



was about to cut the cords when he halted her with a motion.

"One moment, please. Let's understand one another first. If we free your hands it is with the understanding that you do as I say. Incidentally, your hands are too numb to fight. You are quite helpless. What do you say?"

"I say——" Baldridge began, and his eyes narrowed. He looked at the club in the man's hand and strove to find words sufficiently scathing. They would be his obituary, so they must be good.

"When I thought you were just a crook I rather admired you," he went on. "But I hate a coward, and a sneaking one, who kills helpless people worst of all. Especially when he does it just for gain. Why, Anderson, you yellow swine, you're no better than the bandits who get their names and pictures in the tabloids."

He paused and glanced at the girl; then he laughed. "As for this pretty pussy, she gave me the come-on, and I sure bit. Well, you both——"

"Yes—what?" said Anderson sweetly. His face was white, and he was swinging the oak tiller to and fro.

But Baldridge did not hear him. While he was looking at Billie, her left eye, which Anderson could not see, had closed in an unmistakable wink. Now her face was averted, and he noticed that one hand, in her lap, was clenched so tight the knuckles stood out white.

"—you both know what I think of you," Baldridge finished lamely.

"Well, is that all?"

"I'll do what you say—on the chance."

He saw the clenched hand relax, then he heard Andy laugh.

"Turn him loose, kid. Look sharp, captain, we want to make port."

As Anderson strode aft to ship the tiller, Billie bent over Baldridge to cut the lashing on his wrists. She did it quickly and without a word, but just for an instant her eyes met his—and he felt the life blood resurge through his brain. Then she was regarding him with tilted head and a mocking smile upon her lips.

"Now our little mans is free! Does he want nursie to rub his poor hands?"

"Go to hell, you——" Baldridge snarled, and Anderson grinned.

"You seem to have gotten over your infatuation," he remarked.

Baldridge bent his head—partly to blow

on his hands, but more to hide the mad elation in his heart. The blood swirled like fire through his brain. Just let those hands regain their use and he would soon——

Anderson was speaking. "Henceforth, captain, you will stay in the middle part of the boat, by the motor. If you step over that thwart I will shoot you dead. I am well armed, and besides, I wear a chain mail vest—against knifework—an excellent device of the Elizabethans.

"And you, Billie," he continued, "come aft here by me. I don't want you in the line of fire."

"Oh," said Baldridge, "don't worry. I know you'd shoot, quick enough!"

**T**HE sun had set, and night was descending in the hasty fashion of the tropics before the longboat's motor gave a premonitory cough. This was despite the fact that Baldridge had diagnosed its ailment in two minutes and could have cured it in five had he been so inclined. While bending over the engine, he had done some hard thinking, which had led to a very simple conclusion—that he wanted Anderson to run in behind this island *after dark*. It was the only harbor on this part of the coast.

"I'm glad we shall get in," Anderson remarked pleasantly in a few minutes. "I was getting rather spooky over that cruiser, to tell you the truth."

"Well, you'll be safe enough in there. A schooner could hide back of those palms."

"Any native vessels apt to be there?"

"Oh, some little coaster, perhaps."

"Well, if there is," Anderson said calmly, "I want to go alongside. Keep the motor running till about fifty feet from her, and then stop it and sit tight."

"What do you plan to do?"

"That is *my* business," Anderson replied.

The sky quickly darkened as they approached the isle. This was a low coral formation, but so densely covered with trees as to have the appearance at night of a solid mass. Off its western point, at a distance of two hundred yards, a boil of surf flashed out with each swell that flung itself to destruction upon the wicked reef beneath. A cable's length farther lay another, but between the two the water appeared calm and deep.

Miguel was right, thought Baldrige; Captain Teebo would have needed a pilot to go in there. Yet it was obviously the only place where one could find shelter on this whole coast. He gave a rueful smile at the thought of Teebo sailing into port with a fine vessel still under his command, and wondered what sort of a story that worthy would tell. It would be lurid, that was sure. Baldrige would never dare show his face again. But then, it looked as though he might not get the chance.

When last seen, the *Martin J. Pough* had been standing off for Macoris. Well, let her go! It would be a sort of last contact with the world. No other vessel, save the cruiser standing by the old *Perkins'* derelict hull, had been in sight. Baldrige was sure of that.

The more he thought about it, the more he became convinced that Anderson had deliberately rolled her down. A man would stop at nothing who did that. He would not hesitate to board a native coaster and shoot down her innocent crew if he thought it necessary to prevent news of his whereabouts leaking out. Baldrige had noticed the bulge under this real sea devil's coat.

And Billie—great Lord, what a part she had played! She had fooled not only Anderson, but himself. The only way she could have prevented his saying something about the letter in his dazed state.

Baldrige sat nursing his noisy little motor, whose open exhaust echoed from the Haitian hills. A few minutes more and the longboat was slipping past the point, opening up the peaceful harbor within. It was very dark, but as she advanced one could see the dark shadow of the mangroves along the shore. Then suddenly a darker mass detached itself from the land, and the hull of a small schooner appeared to float out upon the glassy, starlit pool. She lay at anchor, her masts and rigging delicately silhouetted against the sky.

Anderson moved his tiller, and swung the longboat so it headed straight for her. "Remember what I told you," he snapped.

"What's that?" Baldrige shouted above the banging of the motor. "Hey, Anderson, did you say something?" he yelled.

"Shut your fool mouth," growled the other. "Keep quiet, or I'll drop you first."

Baldrige sank down beside the motor.

With one hand on the switch, he reached out the other toward a metal object the shape of a goldfish bowl that lay in the bottom of the boat.

The little craft plunged on. Nearer and larger loomed the anchored schooner. She lay stern-to, for which Baldrige felt devoutly glad. In that position all vessels look much alike.

Carefully he gauged the distance. With two hundred feet to go he cut off the spark. The motor stopped.

"Let her go!" said Anderson. "Don't stop her yet!"

"Shucks, Andy, she won't start!" called Baldrige, cranking the motor in vain. He might have added that few *will* start with the switch turned off.

From the stern sheets came a growl, and Baldrige crouched behind the motor as he caught the glint of metal in the other's hand. He heard the girl's voice whisper something, and Anderson grunted and dropped the hand to his side. Meanwhile the longboat coasted on.

She came slowly up to the schooner—it was not the dashing maneuver Anderson had planned. Suddenly, however, he stood electrified, with his eyes glued to the name on the little vessel's stern. This was the moment for which Baldrige had hoped and prayed. He picked up the diver's helmet and hurled it with all the strength he possessed.

It struck Anderson full in the chest. He staggered against the rail. Quick as a panther the girl whirled and gave him a push. His feet slipped, and he fell half over the side of the boat.

Baldrige hurdled the engine, but he saw in a flash it would be too late. Anderson had caught himself and was scrambling back. He regained his footing, but the girl had his pistol wrist in both her hands. A matter of seconds—

"Miguel!" Baldrige yelled. "Miguel, where are you?"

But the *Esperanza's* deck gave back no answering hail.

On feet that seemed weighted with lead, Baldrige sprang aft. The girl struggled to hold Anderson's pistol arm aloft, but in spite of her it was coming down—down — His other fist was drawn back to strike her in the face. Half a second more— Baldrige hurled himself toward them, fearing in his soul he would not be in time.

A hand rose out of the sea, a black arm, a head and massive shoulders, beside the stern of the boat. Lips parted, showing two rows of strong white teeth. From between them came a sharp hiss.

Anderson, half turning his head, glanced down over his shoulder and gave a cry. Then a great black fist closed upon his white arm at the elbow. He staggered and shrieked. A short shriek whose end was muffled in the sea.

Baldrige caught the girl and saved her from being dragged over in Anderson's convulsive grip. She trembled and sank down into the boat. He remained standing, fascinated, peering down into the inscrutable dark water where now only the reflections of stars could be seen, dancing a little from the recent disturbance.

"By George!" said Baldrige. He shivered and sat down.

IT was some minutes before either one spoke. Then, "Nothing yet?" said the girl.

"No, nothing," said Baldrige quietly. "They're both gone."

He looked across the water and up at the silent stars.

Suddenly the girl raised her head. "I can never go back," she said. "Can you?"

"No," said the man.

"We have the little schooner," he added after a pause. "I can turn her into a coasting packet and make a living with her. That is, if——" and he stopped.

The girl nodded. "Go on."

"—if you'll come with me," he went on lamely. "It isn't much to offer, I know."

"Are you saying this to be polite?"

"No," said the man.

"Then I will."

He leaned down and took her hand. It struck him as queer that Fate should have done for him the very thing that Anderson had been trying to make it do.

"I love you, Billie," he said. "We'll make for one of these little Spig ports and have the priest marry us, all shipshape. Until then——"

Suddenly he sprang up and burst into a laugh.

"What fools we are! There is still the treasure, and we have a diving outfit and a boat! Lucky that helmet fell back on

board instead of going overboard. We'll be rich!"

"Of course!" cried the girl. She was laughing, too. They sat down again, holding each other's hands.

"That won't stop our being married?" she asked with a terrified little catch in her voice.

"No," said Baldrige, "we'll do that first. Let's go aboard and make sail. I want to get out of this place."

"So do I."

He started the motor and ran the long-boat back to the *Esperanza*, from which the tide had drifted it away. They stepped on board and Baldrige made the boat fast. He looked around to see that everything was shipshape. Miguel had furled her sails and anchored in a good spot. Satisfied, he turned toward the girl, who had not moved since she stepped on board. He walked over to her and took her in his arms. She was weeping quietly, but she stopped now and looked up into his face.

"Skipper," she said, "I have thought of something awful."

He drew her closer. "Which is——"

"The map—that Miguel tore out of the old book——"

"Oh, he stole that, did he?"

"Yes. And Anderson took it from him. That was the real cause of their row. Anderson took it and refused to give it back. Then he told Miguel to get out. Well, Anderson never let it out of his possession. In fact——she hesitated——"he wore it in some sort of a belt strapped to his body. It is on him now. The treasure is lost."

"The treasure is lost," Baldrige echoed. "Well, let it go—devil take it! It's brought no good to any one yet, except to me!"

"You don't care?"

"No."

"And you really want to marry me—just the same?"

"Yes," said the man with emphasis. "I don't give a rap for anything or anybody but you."

The girl sighed, and her taut muscles relaxed.

"Then," she said softly, as opportunity was given, "let's—forget—the old treasure—and everything—else."



# Lubber of the "Ann Hatch"

By Warren E. Carleton



Abel couldn't haul a swordfish, yet he wouldn't take a mastheader's berth.

**L**OOK at the damn fool! Sufferin' nussfish—jist look at 'im!" Captain Barnabus Hatch's wide shoulders were bunched over, his chunky body rigid, his sea-booted stump legs braced wide apart on the two-masted schooner's after deck. Clapsed behind his back, the stubby fingers of his enormous hands worked nervously. From under his sou'wester his sharp brown eyes in his plump round sun-bronzed face stared wrathfully at the man in the dory who was playing the swordfish.

For the spectacle which the middle-aged skipper of the *Ann Hatch* beheld was enough to kindle fury in the breast of any veteran captain and owner of a Massachusetts fishing vessel on the returns of which he and his crew of seven depended for subsistence. Indeed, the swordfish seemed to be having things just about its own way. With the harpoon head buried in its back where Captain Barney's accu-

ate aim with the harpoon pole had placed it a few moments previously, the deep-water monster plunged and bolted like a race horse, unchecked by the lanky figure in oilskins in the dory. From the fisherman's hands the line attached to the harpoon paid out from the coils lying at his feet. Nor did he make any effort to haul in the slack and coil it again when the swordfish reversed its headlong underwater course.

"What in hell ails him, anyhow?" raged the agitated skipper. "Thar he stands like he's stage-struck, with no more expression in his face than thar is in a potater cut in half! He's goin' to lose that one sure iike he done the last one he tried to haul. Alec!" he yelled to one of the four men who were perched on lookout on the three crossrees of the elongated foremast head. "Scramble down here an' go out an' haul that swordfish 'fore Abel loses 'im! We can't afford to have no more git away from that long-sparrd lubber!"

Down the ratlines scurried Alec Mace. He and the skipper got a dory overside in jig time, and in it Alec rowed out to the craft in which his less fortunate shipmate stood with the harpoon line trailing loosely from his limp fingers. Reaching across the bumping gunwales of the two dories, Alec snatched the line out of Abel Simmons' flabby hands. The lanky fisherman, thus relieved, gazed stupidly at Alec while the latter brought the line around to the other side of his dory.

Then the aspect of the battle changed altogether, and Captain Barney grinned approvingly. With the keen perception of the experienced fisherman, Alec held the line just tightly enough to keep a steady constant pressure on the struggling quarry, yet not with such tension that there was danger of the harpoon's being pulled out. The dory traveled at a rapid clip over the smooth-rolling green ground swell as the swordfish fought against that deadly, exhausting, relentless manila fiber that was with its victim wherever it bolted, whatever dazzlingly-rapid maneuver it executed in the ocean depths.

Soon the huge iridescent form of the spent swordfish rolled over on the surface close to Alec's dory. Holding the taut line with one hand, with the other the experienced fisherman reached down, picked up the lance from the bottom of the craft, and jabbed its sharp metal point into the monster's gills. The green water reddened as he delivered thrust after thrust. The great blue body ceased its struggles.

"Good work, Alec!" applauded Captain Barney, as the schooner chugged up under the power of her oil-burning engine.

Quickly the successful fisherman and his prize were taken aboard. His face longer than ever, Abel Simmons followed Alec over the schooner's side and made his dory fast astern.

Alec climbed back to his seat on the lowest crosstrees. But Abel sheepishly approached the skipper, his blue eyes misty, his homely, hump-nosed features drawn down in utter dejection.

"This has gone fur enough, Abel," Captain Barney hotly declared. "The mess you're makin' of haulin' swordfish, we're actually losin' money on ye. The crew's kickin', an' I don't blame 'em. 'Tain't fair to them to have 'em do all the work an' you share with 'em on what we're paid f'r the fish."

Abel nodded somberly. "I ain't blamin' ye, skipper," he said. "I cal'late I've turned out to be a failure in swordfishin' like I've been in ev'rything else."

"But, damn it, there's no reason f'r it!" said Captain Barney. "There's power in them long arms o' yours, an' a feller in the 'arly thutties is supposed to have *some* brains. When ye start to play a swordfish, ye go at it like a house afire. Then all to once ye seem to go all to pieces, an' wind up by havin' the critter tear itself loose or git away with the line, harpoon, an' the whole business. What comes over ye, anyway?"

Abel sadly shook his head. "I dunno what 'tis, skipper," he replied. "Ev'rything seems to go smooth enough till I look down an' see that big blue shape rollin' an' wiggle under the dory. Then all to once I seem to git the chills—go sort o' paralyzed. I git to thinkin' about how Steve Norton had one of 'em jab its sword through his dory an' git him in the stummick—"

"Steve Norton? Where'd ye ever hear about him?" broke in Captain Barney. "Why, that happened thutty-five year or so ago!"

Abel hesitated and looked down. "It happened the same year I was born," he said. "Steve Norton was my mother's brother—my uncle."

Captain Barney gasped. "Well, I'll be darned!" he muttered. "Marked! Yes, by Godfrey, that's what you must be—marked, with the fear o' swordfish born in ye!"

Abel nodded. "I'm afraid so, skipper," he admitted. "I can remember my mother—how she used to shiver when swordfish or sharks were ever mentioned. I used to, too. Thought I'd got over it. But now I—"

"Pshaw!" scoffed Captain Barney. "Now it's too bad I didn't know that before; I might 'a' fixed up somethin' to cure ye o' that terror o' big fish yer mother marked ye with."

"Can it—do you really think it *can* be cured, skipper?" asked Abel hopefully.

**E**ASY," Captain Barney confidently replied. "I knew two fellers like that. All they need is an almighty good scare—somethin' to give 'em a shock, but at the same time prove to 'em that swordfish an' sharks an' all big fish ain't hard to handle—if they're handled right."

"I'd be willing to go through fire an' brimstone, if 'twould cure me," declared the lanky fisherman. "How was it worked with them fellers, skipper?"

"Well, Cap'n Solon Howes cured Rufus Pratt's boy, Terry, by gittin' him out in a dory with a crazy swordfish. Solon had ironed in the head. Punched Terry's dory. Darned nigh killed him. But Terry was never scared of a swordfish ag'in from that day to this. Then there was Enoch Paty. He was out in a dory with Dave Ellis. Dave had jist hauled a swordfish an' lanced it. Enoch went to slip the fluke rope over its tail. Swordfish come to life, hauled Enoch overboard and darned nigh drowned him. But to-day he's Cap'n Henry Fuller's right-hand man in the schooner *Daisy Fuller*."

"By golly, skipper, if you could fix somethin' like that up for me——"

"Why, not long ago," Captain Barney went on, carried away by his own eloquence, "I dropped into a movin'-picher place in Boston when the *Ann* was layin' over there, an' I seen a feller dive into the water with a big leopard shark. Yes, sir—swum right up to old Mr. Shark, grabbed him round the neck, then *swoosh!* He let a knife drive into the critter's belly while he hung on—a knife he'd been holdin' all the time 'tween his teeth. An' that shark—why, he never even took a nip at 'im! That jist goes to show ye——"

"Skipper, let me haul a crazy swordfish!" pleaded Abel. "Fix up *anything*—anything that'll do for me what it done for Enoch Paty an' Terry Pratt. I'll go through anything that'll stand even the slightest chance o' curin' me." He brandished a clenched bony fist. "The next time you send me out to haul a swordfish——"

"There won't be no next time, Abel," the skipper sorrowfully interrupted. "I've made up my mind to set ye ashore after this trip."

The fire of hope died out of Abel's eyes. He hung his head.

"I cal'lated ye would sooner or later," the lanky fisherman gloomed. "I jist don't seem to fit in nowhere. I've tried jobs ashore. Made a failure of 'em all. I was hopin', when I shipped in the *Ann*, I'd found my true callin'. Never thought how my Uncle Steve died would be a hindrance. Never imagined I was marked. Wife an' kids hoped I'd found myself,

too. Been hard f'r them, skipper; mess I've made of ev'rything. An' now I—I hate to face 'em with the news I've failed ag'in. They were so pleased when I told 'em—you'd give me a berth in the *Ann* and——"

His voice broke. The skipper's eyes lost their severe look.

"I'm sorry f'r 'em, too, Abel," he said sincerely. "I was hopin' f'r their sake ye'd make good, found your callin'—from sea-farin' stock, as you are. But our time's short now. Can't experiment."

He lapsed into deep thought, staring fixedly at the deck. With a despairing sigh, Abel walked slowly toward the foremast. Captain Barney watched him go, his eyes blinking back the moisture that was in them.

"Abel, come back here!" he suddenly called in a husky voice.

The wondering fisherman turned and strode toward the skipper.

"Your eyes seem to be pretty keen, an' ye know the diff'rence 'tween a swordfish fin an' a shark's," Captain Barney commented. "How'd ye like to swap berths with Perez Larkin?"

Again Abel's eyes lighted up. "You mean that you're goin' to let me stay—make me mastheader?" he queried incredulously.

Captain Barney nodded. "On second thought, it seems to be one way cut of it, since you're married an' with folks dependent on ye," he explained. "It's an easy berth, but it's one o' the most important aboard a swordfisherman."

Abel knew that. But he also felt confident that he could make good in that comparatively un Hazardous capacity. He had often envied Perez Larkin—Perez, who stood all day on the narrow tiptop cross-trees while the *Ann* ranged ceaselessly for swordfish; Perez, who did no other work aboard ship but watch for the curved black dorsal fins of their prized quarry and shout steering direction to Bart Ripley, the wheelsman, when he or any other lookout man aloft sighted one; Perez, who never was called upon to go out in a dory and play one of the skipper's harpoon victims——

"Why, sure—the mastheader's berth would suit me fine!" Abel enthusiastically embraced the skipper's proposition. "But Perez—how will he take it?"

"Don't make no diff'rence how he takes

it," Captain Barney grunted. "He's had it soft aboard ship long enough—time he took his turn haulin' swordfish with the other old hands. He's single—no one dependin' on him, like you've got." He bawled to the figure on the highest crosstree. "Hi, Perez—come on down here!"

Perez came. He was a head shorter than Abel and stockier, with a square dark-skinned face and snapping black eyes. His lips were thin and determined, his chin slightly outthrust.

His face fell when the skipper announced the new arrangement.

"Why, Cap'n Barney, I never hauled a swordfish before!" he protested. "I'm thoroughly used to the mastheader's berth, an'—"

"Time ye had a change," the skipper insisted. "No one ever gits anywhere swordfishin' if he don't l'arn to haul 'em some time. All right now, Abel—you an' Perez swap places on the crosstrees."

Abel had a guilty feeling when he climbed aloft to the tiptop crosstrees which Perez had occupied for some ten fishing seasons. Anxiously he looked down at the deposed mastheader who sat, glum and silent, on the lower crosstrees where Abel had formerly perched. The other three on lookout eyed Perez and Abel curiously, astonished by the change.

"I hope you ain't holdin' this agin' me, Perez," Abel said conciliatingly. "It was wholly Cap'n Barney's doin'—I didn't ask him f'r the berth."

Perez swallowed hard, then forced a grin. "Oh, no—that's all right!" he lightly assured his successor as mastheader. "It's time I l'arned to haul swordfish, anyhow, like the rest o' my old shipmates."

"That's the way to take it, Perez!" Alec Mace applauded the deposed mastheader's good sportsmanship.

But Abel wondered if Perez was parting company with that soft berth as mastheader as light-heartedly as he professed.

**N**O swordfish were sighted the rest of the afternoon. With the approach of night, fishing was knocked off for the day, and the men on the crosstrees descended to the deck. Captain Barney shut off the engine, turned the wheel hard astarboard and lashed it down with a becket on one of the spokes. Under foresail and riding sail, the schooner was left to jog during the night. There was little wind

and no fog, but the sky was overcast with sooty-gray clouds.

After mugging up on cold edibles from the cook's locker, the crew met around the forecandle table for their usual nightly card game. Abel lay in his bunk, looking on, for since he had shipped in the *Ann*, especially after he had failed to make good, he felt like an outsider. And now that he had squeezed Perez out of his easy mastheader's berth he felt more out of place than ever. From the sidelong glances which some of them gave him from time to time, he knew that he had been the subject of more than one whispered conversation.

But Perez seemed to be the least concerned of them all. He accepted one of the hands which the skipper dealt, and became a noisy and enthusiastic participant in the game. Abel's hopes rose while he listened to Perez's good-humored bantering of the other players. Was it possible that, after all, the deposed mastheader was reconciled to his new and more arduous duties? That he was not merely pretending to be a good sportsman, but really was one at heart?

At last interest in the game lagged.

"Skipper," Perez asked, "you remember that feller you told us about that swum under a shark an' stabbed him in the movies?"

"Never'll forgit it," replied Captain Barney; "it made such an impression on me."

"Tell us about it ag'in, will ye, skipper?" Perez urged.

Captain Barney did tell it over again—told it enthusiastically without omitting a single detail. Perez listened intently.

"Thanks, skipper," he said when Captain Barney had finished, the other men around the table listening tolerantly but yawningly to the threadbare narrative. "I jist wanted to hear it ag'in to buck up my spirits, seein's I've got to git closer to them big fish than I used to up in the forem'st."

At nine o'clock, all hands, except the watch, turned in. Watches were divided into one hour and forty minutes each, with Captain Barney holding the first and Perez the second. Abel was to relieve Perez at the conclusion of his watch. So with all his clothes on except his sea boots, jacket, and oilskins, he drew up the blankets and was soon snoring.

It seemed as if he had slept no longer than ten minutes when Perez leaned over his head and shook him. Yawning and blinking, Abel rolled out of his bunk, drew on his jacket and a pair of rubber-soled sneakers instead of his customary sea boots. For the deck was dry and the southerly wind was warm. He also left his oilskins behind, and his woolen cap replaced his sou'wester.

After eating a cold corned-beef sandwich and drinking a cup of cold tea, he went up on deck. Perez was still there, standing at the rail. In his hand he held a rope, one end of which was in the water, the rest of its length lying scattered about his sea-booted feet.

"What on 'arth you up to, Perez?" Abel questioned, joining his shipmate at the rail and looking down into the oily, smooth sea.

For answer, Perez hauled in the line. "Fishin' f'r sharks," he explained, holding up the bulky object that was attached to the soaked end of the rope.

Abel leaned over and chuckled while he examined it. For to the line was securely fastened the huge metal hook of a halibut gaff, only about a foot and a half of its sawed-off wooden handle remaining, and around which the rope was wound as a leader. Impaled on that hook was the snout-shorn head of one of the swordfish that had been dressed down and stowed on ice in the hold.

"Ketched ary yit?" inquired Abel, glad of the opportunity to get better acquainted with his predecessor as mastheader.

"Hell, no—I don't expect to ketch none!" Perez explained good-humoredly. "There's always a big school of 'em hangin' round the schooner at night. I jist let 'em grab the bait an' run with it a ways." He nodded at the swordfish head. "I've got the p'int o' the hook stuck in bone, so's the bait'll only git stuck in old Mr. Shark's gullet when he swallows it an' pull out easy after I've fooled with 'im a spell. Watch this."

He dropped the swordfish head into the water. Abel looked over, watching it settle out of sight. Suddenly he gasped. For down toward where the bait had disappeared glided a long ghostly-grayish shadow. Perez saw it, too, and he said:

"They don't skeer me as much as they used to, now I'm gittin' familiar with 'em this way. I cal'late I needed jist such ex-

perience as this 'fore I go out in a dory an'— There—he's got it!"

The line shot through Perez's hands and streaked down into the ground swell. Quickly the shark fisherman gave it a turn around a wooden cleat in the rail. Thus checked, the shark rose to the surface with a splash, and there it floundered about, struggling to dislodge the bait that had stuck in its open maw.

**O**VER Abel swept that same paralyzing sensation which he had experienced while hauling swordfish in a dory. But Perez, apparently unaffected by the commotion the big fish was making, pulled in the line, using the cleat to bear the brunt of resistance, drawing his quarry slowly and steadily toward the schooner. He succeeded in getting the thrashing monster within three yards of the rail, when, with an abrupt slackening of the line, the bait tore out. In a boiling white swirl, the shark put for the ocean depths.

Abel threw off his feeling of utter helplessness.

"Godfrey!" he exclaimed, chagrined at his unwarranted fears. "They *ain't* so hard to handle, be they?"

"Naw—the skipper's right," replied Perez calmly. "If you keep your head, they're no wuss to handle than codfish. An' I cal'late when I git in a dory, I'll find swordfish jist as easy to handle. I'd jist like to see what one o' them sharks would do if I really hooked 'im. Say, Abel—want to try it?"

Abel was not so keen about that. "Cal'late two of us could handle 'im if we did hook 'im?" he asked dubiously.

"Sure we could handle 'im!" declared Perez. "We could tucker 'im out by usin' this cleat jist like I've been doin' when I wa'n't tryin' to hook 'em. Then haul 'im aboard an' lance his gills, an' give the skipper an' the boys a surprise. I cal'late I couldn't git no better experience f'r my new job—or you, either, Abel, if you're ever called upon to haul a swordfish ag'in. Here goes!"

He hauled in the swordfish head. Abel's heart was pounding with anticipation while he watched Perez readjust the bait on the hook so that the sharp point of the barbless gaff was barely concealed in a soft-fleshed portion of the late swordfish's lower jaw. It would not do to let on to Perez that he was scared, that he did not relish the pros-



pect of having that big gray shark flapping about on deck. But as Perez had said it would give him more experience—the opportunity which Abel had asked for to fight down his inherent fear of big fish, and the skipper denied him. If he only could overcome that weakness—

Into the water the hook splashed with its readjusted bait. Again Abel watched it settle—and again a gray shadow moved sluggishly downward after it—and another!

"Jumpin' Jupiter!" Perez whispered excitedly. "Two of 'em! Now watch!"

Abel's trembling hands rested on the rope, ready to assist his shipmate after the quarry had grabbed the bait. He felt the line suddenly quiver under his fingers. Out it streaked, drawn by a great submarine force that defied the two fishermen to curb it.

"He's got it—now give it to 'im!" shouted Perez. "One—two—now!"

Grabbing the line, which was now not moving so fast, Perez and Abel gave a sharp haul together. Immediately the rope flashed out, as if the sudden resistance at its deck end had agonized the shark into renewed activity.

"We've hooked him clean!" whooped Perez. "Don't try to hold 'im—let 'im run! I'll 'tend to the line!"

Abel in fascination watched the line pay out. Perez bent down, reaching for the rope lying scattered about on deck, as if to loop it around the cleat and stem the shark's charge.

"Look out!" he suddenly screeched.

Abel felt an abrupt tightening about his waist. Horrified, he reached toward his belt. Something lifted him lightly as a feather off his feet, banged him against the rail, bore him over it, kicking, clawing at the air.

"Help—Perez—help!" he cried.

Flat on his back he hit the water and sank under the surface. The shock of it cleared his brain in a flash, and with it came the full realization of what had happened. Like the doddering fool that he was, he had stepped into one of those coils lying on deck. The charge of the shark had tightened that coil about him and drawn him impotently overboard, like a cork bobber on a boy's fish-line tugged underwater by a biting pickerel.

Down through the icy depths he whirled, rolling over and over.

OUT of the *Ann's* forecastle the fishermen bolted from their bunks at Perez Larkin's cry down the hatch. "All hands up! Oh, good Lord! A shark's pulled Abel Simmons overboard!"

Captain Barney reached the rail first of all, where Perez stood, jabbering incoherently and staring across the quiet, unruffled ground swell.

"Quit that chatterin'—tell us how it happened—quick!" excitedly demanded the skipper. Alec Mace had raced aft and was jumping into the dory that was always towed astern.

"We was fishin' f'r sharks—with a gear I'd rigged up," Perez sobbed trembling, his eyes still fixed half hopefully on the water where the lanky fisherman had vanished. "We hooked one, him an' me together. Then when I reached down an' snubbed the line on the cleat—I seen the line ketch round his legs—ketch while the shark was pullin' it out. I sung out—but he—he— Oh, Lord, skipper, 'twas awful! He went over the rail! He's there now! He—oh, skipper, what c'n we—"

"Work in closer to the schooner, Alec!" Captain Barney bawled at the doryman who was aimlessly rowing about off the *Ann's* starboard side, glancing over his shoulders between strokes. "Git another dory over! Quick!" he sang out to the rest of the crew, who jumped to the nested dories. "If we go into Boston with flag half mast—an' Abel with a wife an' fam'ly—"

"Oh, if I'd only never hooked that shark!" moaned Perez, wringing his hands, his square dark face distorted with grief. "If I'd only seen where Abel was treadin' in time to save him from—"

"Alec—Alec!" the skipper frenziedly yelled, pointing astern, his eyes bulging. "There's somethin'—somethin' splashin'! Put f'r it, Alec—put f'r it, ev'ry man o' you!" he called to the occupants of the two other dories that had been dropped overside.

Toward the spot some distance off the *Ann's* stern where the splashing shattered the smoothness of the ground swell, the three dories raced. Alec far in the lead, his craft sped on by his hurried, powerful strokes. Breathless, speechless, the skipper and Perez watched while Alec's dory shot between them and the turmoil in the even-rolling swell. Alec jumped to his feet, leaned over the gunwale.

"He's got him!" whooped Captain Bar-

ney, as Alec drew a dark form from the water and the other two dories leaped alongside his craft. "Alec's got him! Thank Heaven!"

Back to the *Ann* the three dories sped. Perez grabbed a boat hook and the skipper another to assist in getting the rescued fisherman aboard the schooner.

But their help was not needed. While Captain Barney and Perez looked on anxiously, the dark form slumped down in the stern of Alec's craft was lifted by the other boatmen to the *Ann's* deck and set down tenderly on the wooden planking.

Weak, quivering, gasping for breath that he couldn't seem to get enough of, Abel sat up, his shipmates surrounding him. Perez knelt and threw his arms around him in an overjoyed embrace. But the skipper gently drew him aside, ordering:

"Let 'im git his wind. He'll be all right after that."

The long rope in which he was entangled still trailed from Abel's waist, the baitless hook at one end. The lanky fisherman looked about him and started to speak. But Captain Barney broke in:

"How'd ye do it, anyway, Abel? You ain't the fust fisherman I've heard of who was pulled overboard by gittin' snarled up in a rope. But you're the fust I ever heard of who got loose when t'other end o' that rope was fast to a four or five-hundred-pound shark."

Abel gulped. "I cal'late 'twas remem-berin' that story o' yourn, skipper, 'bout that feller who tussled with that shark in the movies," he answered weakly. "When I hit the water, it come over me all of a sudden that a halibut gaff ain't got a barb on it like a reg'lar hook. I seen a chance f'r myself then. Grabbed the line. Hauled myself hand over hand to the gaff handle stickin' up from where the hook was planted in the shark's nose——"

"Godfrey mighty!" Captain Barney burst out. "An' you—you rode that shark?"

"Not long, I cal'late—but long enough." Abel grinned. "Wind was about gone. Head fair bustin'. Whirlin' through the water like a pinwheel. Hung onto the gaff handle. Twisted an' shoved an' bent it. Shark turnin' over an' over all the time. Must 'a' hurt him, the way he capered. Anyhow, the hook come loose all of a sudden."

"Shark was workin' hard as you to tear it loose," contributed Alec Mace. "Havin'

your weight on the gaff handle helped. Now——"

"Shut up!" roared the skipper. "Let Abel go on."

"That was all," resumed Abel. "Next thing I knowed, I was on the surface, winded. Then the dory came."

"But, Abel, I—I hope you ain't blamin' me f'r it!" quavered Perez. "With you gittin' the mastheader's job away from me—the easiest job aboard ship—an' me holdin' it for y'ars—it must look like I—I somehow fouled ye in that line a-purpose, Abel, you don't believe that, do ye? I couldn't help it—I sw'ar I couldn't! I tried to grab that line when I seen you'd got ketched in the coils. But the shark pulled it out o' my hands. Honest he did! I done my best to——"

"Hold on, Perez!" broke in Captain Barney. "Say, this *does* look rather queer. Guess I'd better take a look at that line around Abel's waist."

He stooped and examined the line. All hands looked on in amazed, breathless silence.

"Two distinct loops!" the skipper exclaimed, rising. "Yes, sir, two coils, not one, tightened around Abel's waist. Can't tell me Abel stepped into *two* of 'em at the same time. You overdone it, Perez, when you pretended to snub that line around the cleat. An' all the time you was bringin' up them two coils around his waist, thinkin' he'd never be seen ag'in to fasten suspicion on ye."

"But, skipper, I never—I sw'ar I never——" the terrified Perez started to protest.

"You can do your explainin' to the authorities ashore," Captain Barney interrupted. "Mebbe ye can convince them. Ye can't *me*."

Abel's eyes suddenly brightened. He looked away from the skipper and his accused shipmate. Hauled up the line. Uttered a cry of joy.

"Look, skipper—look!" he shouted holding up what looked like a kink in the line between him and the bare hook of the gaff.

Captain Barney and all hands bent over him in a close circle.

"By Godfrey—the cleat!" gasped the skipper.

"Sure—with the line snubbed around it *twice*!" gladly whooped Abel. "Right where Perez snubbed it before it tore out!"

"Which proves Perez didn't lie, an' that Abel really *did* step in them two coils," declared Alec Mace. "If the cleat had held, Abel wouldn't 'a' gone overboard."

"An' if Perez snubbed that line to the cleat, he certainly didn't have time to bring up them coils around me," said Abel. "Because I can swear that line wa'n't snubbed to the cleat before Perez bent down to do it."

Captain Barney apologetically grasped Perez's hand. "Perez," he said, "I'm askin' your pardon f'r what I said about ye. But under the circumstances, it *did* look——"

"I know it, an' I ain't blamin' ye, skipper," gratefully cut in the relieved and smiling Perez. "I did look like I'd set that shark trap f'r Abel a-purpose. Thank Heaven that cleat was snubbed twice so's the line held to it!"

Abel was on his feet with a bound. His strength had returned to one exuberant gush. Captain Barney seized his hand.

"The mastheader's berth is yours for life, Abel," he promised emphatically. "You've had all the frills an' flourishes a

fisherman's entitled to in this world. You deserve an easy place on the crosstrees. An' I cal'late Perez will never begrudge it to ye, after you saved his pelt by showin' us that cleat. It might 'a' dropped off unnoticed, if we'd flipped the line round too much."

"You're right, skipper," Perez gratefully seconded. "I'm beholden to Abel the rest o' my natural life. If it hadn't been f'r that cleat, I'd never slept peaceful ag'in."

The lanky fisherman grinned. "I'm appreciatin' your good intentions, skipper," he said, "an' yourn, too, Perez. But I cal'late that mastheader's berth is too tame f'r me now. You can have it, Perez, an' welcome. If it's the same f'r you, skipper, I'll take my chances haulin' swordfish in a dory, along with the rest o' the boys. I cured, I am now, too. Somehow I've got a notion 'twill take an almighty smart swordfish to git away from me now."

"I know damn well 'twill!" commented Captain Barney.



# Gorge of the Sorceress

By M. L. Elliott



A brush with the pirates of the Yangtze gorges.

**O**N the bright vermilion stanchion of the wharf at Ichang a little dejected figure sat wrapped in puzzled thought. It was strange for Yuen Shi to be quiet so long, stranger for him to be sunk in gloom as he undoubtedly was. His mind was as blue as the richly embroidered coat he wore, and that was of deepest indigo.

Tethered some feet away, along the landward side of the bamboo quay, was little Yuen's pony. Sturdy and strong, the mare's coat showed the exercise to which his master had that morning driven her willing strength. It was upon that futile morning ride that Yuen's thoughts were turned. He was racking his baby brain to find the straight road out of the dilemma.

The seventh moon of the lad's ninth year had just a night ago strung herself with her strong, sharp claws in the early

evening sky. It was the fascinating spring-time in the fertile valley of the Middle Kingdom. The high copper-colored waters of the Yangtze were vibrant with sampans, bumboats and tiny fishing craft, the latter with their neck-ringed cormorants sleepy on their early-morning perches. None of these interested the usually wide-eyed Yuen. Even twin boats with a single net caught fish, but not his fancy.

For once it was not his own troubles to which his thoughts kept reverting. Usually he could be counted upon to supply all the trouble his own mischievous mind could unearth. To-day was different.

His anxiety this early morning was for another person—for a young American girl who had fired his childish fancy.

There on the little stanchion, he sat swinging his legs and recalling the day he had his first sight of Grace Kingdon, or rather "Miss Bronze Hair," as he called

her. That day, some time back, he had been playing along the banks of the River of the Golden Sand, his most beloved playground. He had seen a curious vessel coming up the river and had run to the dock to see it clearer. It was a fat and stocky tugboat that waddled in the high water of the upper Yangtze with the air of one of his mother's elderly amahs coming home laden from market. She waddled and sidled through the copper-colored river with a long streamer of smoke behind, flung on the breeze till it looked like Ah Yet's pigtail that he had cut off one day in a fit of modern fancy and lived to rue by curling it constantly within his cap.

From the deck of the, to Yuen, amusing vessel stepped a girl and a young man—people from the world across the water. Yuen had retreated behind a huge bit of wharfage covered with a bright orange jute sacking. He watched, fascinated, as the pair were met with joyous greeting by the people from the mission on the hill—a Doctor Perry Stockton and his wife.

Little Yuen had scarcely ever been within the mission compound—not that it had any parental taboo. The old mandarin, his father, was too sincere in his belief that all religions were essentially one, to forbid any of his family contact with the mission folk.

The daughters of the family were familiar with the attractive American family, they learned and spoke English with a lilt—ing halt in their Oriental monotonics, but Yuen, ever averse to books, avoided the possibilities of the doctor's home.

Never had his sisters been able to persuade him to take the time devoted to his prowls around the Ichang markets or along the quays and piers of his beloved Kiang, to visit the Stockton household. Now there was a sudden difference.

With the coming of Grace Kingdon and her brother, an engineer from America, the latter visiting mines in the western mountains, to stay for a while with the girl's friend and schoolmate, the pretty wife of the American doctor, new glory descended on the mission. Yuen Shi commenced to haunt the portals of the low rambling house; to sit astride his pony at its gate—ever hopeful of the always-forthcoming bid to enter.

And what had it been that made such a difference to this little ten-year-old? Nothing more unusual than the bright aureole

of Grace Kingdon's red-gold hair that stole glory from the sun in the tips of its curling ringlets. To Yuen it seemed like spray from his well-known river. This had caught his fancy.

But it was Grace's merry ways, her fund of stories, her tales of far-off America and especially of her own well-loved San Francisco, that held the mischievous lad until he had mastered English in a tithe of the time his sisters had required.

Grace's hair continued, however, to fascinate the boy. This very morning he had arisen early, long before the rest of the family, even the kitchen boys, were up. Throwing the painted and gilded wooden saddle over his rough-coated Manchurian pony, he had set out for the mission compound. He knew that Missy Bronze Hair would be up and riding early—he hoped to catch her before she started.

Even with his early rising, Yuen had been too late. Far ahead of him he had seen only glimpses of the girl. She was galloping on a fine horse whose speed Yuen's pony tried but failed to overtake. Something struck the little lad's heart with dismay.

The merry girl of whom he was so fond was seen riding alone. The boy knew that this had been forbidden to her. He knew that when her brother had departed to the mountains west of Ichang, he left urgent warnings with Grace. To these had been added the advice of the Stocktons and then a few days before, a letter from her brother, forbidding the girl to ride into the hills and ever to ride alone.

Pirates were common menaces on the river; often they landed, and, hiding in the glens and hills, hunted as brigands do the unwary traveler. Forbidden to ride these fascinating hillsides, Grace laughingly had bantered her friends but not promised.

This morning Yuen had perceived her far ahead of him, riding alone without the escort of stable boys she should have taken. He was troubled then; he was more so now. He had seen on the city walls an insolent placard, signed by the seal of the Yellow Bonnets, an impudent warning for foreign devils to keep away from the Ichang hills. He learned, too, from a chance remark of a river boatman that the famous pirates called the Yellow Bonnets were camped again at Sorceress Gorge.

Since long before Yuen Shi had been born on the old mandarin's plantation at

Boo Poo, the shipping of the Yangtze had been ravaged by two rival bands of river pirates—the Crimson Eyebrows and the Yellow Bonnets, both named for the head-gear they wore.

It had been the latter band alone who had plundered the upper river of late years; the province of Woo Pee, under the rule of the old, scholarly Mandarin Yuen Ti, no longer drew the unwelcome attentions of the Crimson Eyebrows. Wang Nu, their captain, now piloted his red-lacquered junk, with its carved and gilded poop and gleaming copper prow, propelled by a lanteen sail of purple, up to the Ichang dock for but one purpose—to visit the old mandarin.

The two would sit in the old scholar's study and discuss poetry over innumerable cups of tea and bowls of sweetmeats. Both the pirate and the mandarin were gentlemen and scholars and hence, in China, poets themselves.

**T**HESE latter days were times when Wang Nu would appear in Ichang, clad in shining raiment of his own caste; his sharp and curving Malay dirk well hid under the folds of his sash—for he, too, was a sash wearer from the north. These days were long hours of joy to little Yuen, who was his great friend and ardent admirer. Wang of late had failed to come for one of his rare visits. Surely he must be coming soon. Yuen gazed with longing down the river. If only he could see those purple sails heave into sight.

The boy wanted the pirate chief to advise him. He feared the girl with hair like the golden river in spring had ridden straight into the clutches of the fierce and ruthless Yellow Bonnets.

Down the river this early morning his eye peered anxiously, seeking a hint of the purple sail on the scarlet junk. Though he sat kicking his heels for longer than it takes the shimmering sand to run twice through the crystal vase of the time bulb in his father's hall, nothing appeared on the horizon so interesting as the ship of the Crimson Eyebrows.

Shrugging shoulders with Oriental resignation, he launched his figure from the vermilion standard; he ran, clopping on his wooden stilts, over to where he had tethered his pony. Heading her homeward, Yuen cracked her furry rump with his short crop of jeweled ivory and teak. The pony gazed a reproachful moment at

her little master, who was not high enough to touch the crimson leather of her bridle. Then she galloped obediently in the direction of her stable and belated oats. Yuen turned his eager footsteps to town.

Through the narrow and noisy streets by the water front he ran. He passed under shadows made by the curling roofs whose liplike edges met in a caress above the squalid streets. Yuen flew along, picking his long blue coat out of the filth and muck of the gutters. His direction was toward the town proper—the markets and bazaars of Ichang.

Through a western gate that leads hard by the Lane of Red Dusk, he passed the watchman sleepily going about his task. "Ah, little lord of the province," he said, making profound obeisance to the representative of all the Yuens, "and has thy face this morning had its bath of dew?"

The lad nodded absently; not this day had he time to return the query, which was the Chinese morning greeting. Instead he heard the watchman sound a salute on the huge brass disk he carried. The discord followed his disappearing back through Needlework Lane and Physic Street all the way until he reached the great mart of the richer merchants—the Street of Delectable Goodness. There on the corner, he beheld a sidewalk merchant dispensing morning repasts of steaming bean curd and hot rice to early workers.

Up to the copper stand, heated by a portable charcoal stove, stepped the boy, hunger manifesting itself at the delectable odor. He wished the regular merchant for the soft curd had been open; then he might not have needed to use his last square-holed cash for the food—he always shook the fortune sticks in their leather cylinder and he usually won his throw. But he was too busy this morning to worry over spending a few coin.

As he had passed through the fringes of the town he had not loitered as was his wont. Even the venerable catcher of crickets who plied his early morning trade by the roadside missed Yuen's usual chatter and was wounded by the boy's curt nod. Neither could an old friend, the woodsman, busy with his logs and his backward-drawn saw, hold him; nor the blind flutist on the Alley of Celestial Sounds, who was busily exhaling through his slender bamboo pipe, beguile him to his customary lingering. He was bound for the shop of a tobac-

conist, friend of Wang Nu, from whom he might have word of the pirate.

Arriving in the Street of Delectable Goodness, he hurried along, though he tarried a moment with the itinerant barber. The latter was all ready with his portable chair and soapy lather, to shave a customer. To the man, Yuen put the question seething in his brain. Had he seen the captain of the Crimson Eyebrows, the great and marvelous Wang Nu, pirate and gentleman, and friend of the house of Yuen?

The barber stopped in his task, though he had just ushered a fat and pompous merchant of the third class into his little rickety chair, and the latter was intent on puffing lather from half his face. Bowing low, listening not at all to the protests of the merchant, the barber replied to the little lord of the province.

He begged that the most honorable son of his master, the great and unapproachable highness, the keeper of all wisdom and dweller in the Forest of Pencils—by which method he referred to the scholarly traits of the old mandarin—he trusted that his own deep and impossibly-vile ignorance would be graciously forgiven and forgotten by the son of his master, but—he had not seen Wang Nu.

Scarcely waiting to appropriately thank the barber, Yuen dashed on. He almost literally bowled over the fat honey merchant who stood sunning himself by his gorgeous shop sign. The man was as smooth, as sugary, as bland as the merchandise he sold. He begged that the young heir of the Yuens would enter and test a new sweetmeat. Yuen refused, though his little tongue lusted for the goody. He posed instead his request for knowledge of the whereabouts of Wang. Now the honey merchant was in touch with the life up and down the river; he knew the crews and the gossip of the bumboat men who cater to the well-known sweet tooth of the sailors. He was in touch, too, with the itinerant peddlers who ranged the hundreds of miles between Nanking and Ichang, vending their wares from village to village along the way. But the honey merchant had no news, though he again trusted that the son of his master, the great mandarin, cousin of the emperor, son of Heaven, would condescend to enter his shop. Again Yuen refused and pressed on to the neighboring tobacconist.

There he felt sure of news. And all this

time his Missy Bronze Hair had been riding straight for the hiding places in the hill glens where the perfidious Yellow Bonnets lurked in wait for lone travelers. He could see them in his childish imagination, hidden in the crevices of the purple rocks, dashing down madly on the girl, who would be alone and unarmed. But even Wang's friend of the tobacco shop had nothing to offer in the way of information. He had not heard for more than a third of a full circle of moons news of the doughty pirate chief.

Disappointment painted itself large over Yuen's face. He was about to retreat to his home and seek counsel of his father, little as he hoped advice from those scholarly lips would prove of value in action. Then he caught a glimpse of Foo Ting, the vender of succulent sugar cane. Yuen ran forward greedily.

There was one thing that the boy never could resist—the sirupy, sweet juice, forbidden at home to his baby teeth. He seized the chunk of dripping cane old Foo cut and handed him, thanking the man in long sonorous periods copied from his father. Still a frown, like puzzled creases on the forehead of his mother's sleeve dog, wrinkled his usually unruffled brow. Troubled thought clouded his dark beady eyes.

The vender, apologizing for impatiently disturbing him, begged to know what was the matter. A Yuen Shi, sober and sad, had been a mystery all morning from the ancient cricket catcher to the placid honey merchant. Yuen, despairing, told him—he needed Wang Nu. He had no expectation now of finding word of the pirate.

"Chase then your fears, O chosen jade of Heaven, priceless jewel of the heart, and son of the house of Yuen," responded the old vender. "Wipe away the frown that mars your celestial brow, O rose with the breath of jasmine, for I have news. Only yesternight, this totally unworthy person spoke to the great Wang, your friend, at his anchorage at Hi Tien, some miles down the river."

**S**CARCELY pausing to bow and repeat the fervid thanks he felt, Yuen was off again—once more to the quay. He arrived breathless and flushed, his long coat torn and soiled by the narrow alleys he had chosen in his short cut

to the wharf. Once at the water's edge, he coaxed an oarsman with a sampan to row him down the copper river, grandly presenting his jeweled crop, as passage money to the astonished, somewhat-frightened river coolies. Swiftly the naked men in the little river craft fell to their task. In the bow, Yuen sat moodily on the raised bamboo seat beneath the matting awning. Ever and anon he urged the rowers to speed; suddenly he rose in the boat.

"Offspring of vipers," he cried in his excitement, "spawn of toads with black hearts, hurry, hurry! Would you lose him for me now? There, far ahead of you—the purple sail winging yonder. Down the river with you, you sons of snails. Catch him, else I will wake the dragon who slumbers on the Tien Shien, Heaven Tall Mountains, to fire you with his breath."

Fear-struck, the rowers bent to their oars, their muscles bulging to bursting through the skin, their backs bathed in sweat, while Yuen mounted now on the seat, urged them on to greater efforts by alarming execrations.

But farther and farther from them the red-lacquered junk, with its lanteen sail of purple, went down their river beyond their reach. Yuen keeping his eyes on the disappearing sail, had no thought for other boats that were constantly passing the sampan. He never caught a glimpse of the gorgeous one with pompous poop that sailed steadily on to Ichang tossing the sampan in her rollers from sheer weight of dignity.

Suddenly the wind, blowing hard from the southeast, died. The purple sail which had been at the point of fading to a faint cloud on the horizon of the copper flood, now loomed larger. But it was only a passing fancy on the part of the god of the winds; he only teased the little boy by giving him a nearer glimpse of the boat of his friend. Then the wind god rose again; into the down-river waters sped the junk until it disappeared from view. Yuen crumpled on the little seat, balled his head in his arms and cried like the youngster he was. The oarsmen politely averted their faces that he would not lose face at having displayed chagrin.

They had not stopped rowing. Silently they were driving the sampan through the waters until their wild young master should give the word to return. Yuen's face was buried in his arms. Miles they

slid down the river. Suddenly they shouted, and Yuen looked up. There before him, pressing close on the flying heels of a tea boat, piled high with catty boxes of young Hyson, fragrant across the evil-smelling stream, there shone the red-lacquered junk. The captain of the Crimson Eyebrows stood at the wheel, directing the chase of a rich cargo; he had turned to pursue and met the boat with the little lad.

Tears still moist on his cheek and clinging to his eyelashes, Yuen stood on the seat and yelled. High on the brilliant junk a tall vivid figure lifted a single spyglass. He bellowed directions; the tea boat with its precious cargo was forgotten. Wang Nu heeded the desperate call of his little friend.

Pikes thrust out from the sampan to stay its cockle sides from the teak of the junk, the rowers came close in trembling agony at sight of the forbidding figure of the goddess fury, ruler of the underworld, carven on the prow. Up the flimsy ladder, Yuen's little feet carried him with his tale of Missy Bronze Hair and her probable fate, for the understanding ears of Wang Nu.

Forgotten, on the junk, was the sweet-scented chop boat, fleeing unpursued on her course. Wang and his men, eager to be of service, seated the little boy before a low food-filled table on the deck while he poured out his woes. Meantime the junk continued her way up the river toward the Ichang dock.

"What makes you think your friend has been captured?" asked the pirate when Yuen had finished.

Yuen considered. He admitted that he did not know, but he had heard in the street markets, as well as seen the insolent poster, that the leader of the Yellow Bonnets had told hawkers, met on his trails, that he would take the little American girl captive on her next ride. He told Wang how he had tried to warn her, how he had then in his inadequate way endeavored to tell Mrs. Stockton of her friend's peril. He had desisted when he saw that he was alarming more than informing her. So he had risen early each morning to make sure her boys rode with her, for they being lazy swine of stable boys, liked to lie abed in the morning. He told Wang what the other already knew—that the captain of the Yellow Bonnets was a sniveling coward; not fit to be leader of



a noble band of pirates, and that he only pounced upon lone riders.

That morning the lark in the garden had failed of her duty. She sang too high or too low; Yuen slept too late. Only a glimpse of the girl he had caught, the red gold of her hair glinting in the sun far up on the trail, high in the hills—that and the moving shadows of her horse. She had been alone.

"But we shall be sure to know," he concluded, patting the flagreed rail of the poop deck. "There is sure to be news when we dock, think you not so, Wang?"

Sure enough, there was a milling crowd on their arrival at the water front of the town; hordes of the townsmen were on the quay when their sampan left the anchored junk. It was for two reasons.

The first lay out in the river. There, riding lazily at anchor, was a princely barge; it was the same one whose matronly roll had rocked the boat carrying the unseeing Yuen down the river in pursuit of Wang. The great boat glittered and gleamed in the morning sun, splashed with the chops of the copper water. Its decks were alive with active figures running up and down, making ready a small silk-sailed-and-awned gig. By the side of the famous red-lacquered junk, the great boat loomed, dulling and dwarfing its splendor.

More important to Wang and the lad were the long paper scrolls of black-splashed red that were insolently pasted on the dock-house walls. The captain of the Yellow Bonnets impudently announced that he had captured the "foreign-devil" girl and demanded thirty thousand taels be dispatched to him at once or, in three days, he would send her red head back in a wicker basket to Ichang.

**T**HEN terror did strike the heart of little Yuen. He read the boastful scroll with horror, forgetting that his father was rich and generous and inclined to the ways of peace. Wang had not forgotten. He loved the old man, but he was not always as ready to offer an eye to the man who had plucked off his ear. The queerly assorted pair of friends stood side by side on the dock. The small boy looked up to the impressive height of the man, twirling fierce mustaches and fingering his circling dirk.

Just then noise of gongs and cymbals attracted the boy—a procession was coming

along the road from his home to the dock. Leading it was his father's finest and least used sedan chair, followed by a large crowd of guards, servants, runners, and retainers of the mandarin. The leading chair was empty, but it was followed by all the rest of the conveyances Yuen Ti boasted. When Yuen saw that his father was not present, his heart gave a leap of joy. He had feared his project faced denial. Then the sounds of the strident clatter ashore awoke the men on the barge to even more feverish activity. The gig by the side was being made ready; its silken sails of apricot hue spread to the wind, and its awning of crimson satin tightened into place.

Before this the lad had scarcely noticed the resplendent ship that paled the glory of the junk he loved. Now he looked it over carefully. It was the most gorgeously decked vessel that even Yuen had ever seen, familiar as he was with brilliant-hued craft, exotically spread.

Indeed it might have been a palatial dream, the barge of the ancient and mighty Genghis Khan himself, returned to life. To the child's eyes it was so splendid that he knew it must be bringing the emperor himself hidden behind the arabesque-inlay on the gilded sides of the cabins. Up and up and up, rose the high sides—seven poops in all, terraced one on the other; their roof lines curving upward to snare the spirits of evil waters. The sides of each poop were built of flagreed wood backed with gold lacquer and inlaid with precious nacre. Only a single mast she carried, but that was shining in the eastern sun, dark satiny teak with more inlays of mother of pearl at its base.

And the sail. That huge lanteen slung on the solitary mast was satin, woven of alternating stripes of purple and crimson, brocaded with golden threads. At her prow, curving high, she bore a dragon with enormous eyes of green jade that glittered in the dark blue, almost purple head of the carven beast. The eyes glittered and seemed to wink across the water at the little boy. Then as he watched there stepped from the door of the cabin a man, an enormous but magnificent figure.

Could it be the emperor himself? Though Yuen recalled that his far-off cousin in Peking said he blinded the eyes that saw him with his radiance. The lad rubbed his eyes and blinked. He still could

see. This then was not, could not be the emperor.

At sight of the dazzling figure, a shout had gone up from the dock; the lordly creature on the barge acknowledged it with a wave of his white jade fan in fingers aristocratically lengthened by preposterous nails, shielded with jeweled claws of gold.

"Hail the great and mighty ever honorable prince!"

"Who is he?" eagerly questioned Yuen.

"The boat, I vow," replied Wang Nu, "is the barge of state of Prince Chang. Many the time have my eyes seen it in the lower river. He's the overlord of this flowery valley, the hall of Heaven of the Middle Kingdom. He must be coming to pay a call of ceremony. On your serene and noble father without doubt and the neighboring nobles."

"Then you'll meet the man, Wang," said Yuen with fervor, "and tell me all about him, won't you?"

"Nay. I'll not be bidden to meet him, save with a cangue round my neck. The prince yonder would have no traffic with a pirate undecorated with the wooden collar. In the lamp of welcome there is no oil this moon, for Wang. Without oil, the wick is wasted."

"Who is the fat man, Wang, that he would not be proud to meet you?" asked the little boy in a puzzled maze.

"I told you"—there was laughter in Wang's voice—"he's a great soldier prince who would mount all pirates and me with them, on black camels. But that's all as it should be. Mix with hawks in the air and the dove is called a bird of prey. He represents, in this region of the Middle Kingdom, his most unspeakable goodness and unseeable greatness, the son of the celestial clouds who never leaves his city of the ruddy dawn."

"Oh," said the little Yuen.

The gig, having taken a brace of strong men to hold it steady and firm for the huge prince's boarding, now pulled ponderously from the gorgeous craft. Wang Nu watched the little lad quizzically. His face lit with a mellow smile as Yuen turned to him with a sudden cry.

"But Wang—Wang Nu—most valued of all the strong trees in the forest of friendship, Wang—we are and we must not, forget little Missy Bronze Hair."

"I had not," replied the pirate, "I am off at once." Wang took a stride toward

his sampan still drawn by the side of the quay. He halted. "I have a message for your father, the most distinguished mandarin, Yuen Ti, if you can find his ear in yon mass of peacock feathers. I opine, little Yuen, that your house is to have the sacred honor of entertaining the lordly creature who approaches with the rush of a cataract in dry season." He smiled a bit sardonically at the slow pace of the gig. "So tell your illustrious father who deigns to give me a crumb of his friendship, that Wang goes to wipe out that nest of the vipers—to rid forever the Gorge of the Sorceress of the pest of the Yellow Bonnets."

Yuen tried to cling to him, he extended clutching hands to find empty air. "Take me, Wang, take me with you!" came in imperious tones from the little throat.

But the captain of the Crimson Eyebrows shook his head up and down in negation. "No, my little Yuen, too precious a jewel are you to be lost in the whirling water of the upper river or crushed on the flinty stones of the gorge. Too easily a flower crushed, too young a bird are you to fly."

He was stepping into his sampan when Yuan's cry reached him. "I must go with you, Wang, I must. It isn't fair to leave me."

"Nay, it cannot be so," said Wang decisively, springing into the sampan. With a raised hand he directed his rowers and in a moment they were boat lengths away. Yuen was left impotently standing, hands outstretched on the quay. In front of so many townsfolk he scorned to betray his bitter chagrin. Here he could not lose face.

Turning, carefully casual, he minutely observed the gig with its splendid passenger, approach the wharf with stately dignity. Such an enormous man was this prince. Over twinkling humorous eyes he wore huge glasses, goggles bound in wide tortoise shell, curving like bat's wings over his ears. Round his neck was a precious necklace glittering with jewels and ending in a huge breastplate of gold, studded with diamonds. His great legs sported the crimson leggings that were denied even to so high a noble as Yuen's father but, like the latter, he wore a cap, round in front, square to the rear. The cap of Yuen's father was crested with a button of fine lapis, this great prince wore the even more glorious

one of red coral, and while the scholar mandarin wore his cap plain, this soldier prince trailed from his cap the proud single peacock feather of the warrior.

**T**HE gig docked. From it and into the sedan chair of state, lumbered the fat man, followed into the lesser chairs by his retinue. Then with shrill cries and clatter of drums, cymbals, and gongs, the runners keeping step with their eternal singsong, the procession was off up the road to the house of Yuen. It lay, half hidden on the low hill, surrounded by a hedge of arbor vitæ; a low, rambling, one-story structure, with roofs of orange-red tiles curling upward like the corolla of a flower, covering literally acres of land with its wide-swung rooms, verandas, and inner courtyards. There it was—the house which had for generations seen the birth and death, the loves, the hopes, the sorrows of the family of the great Yuens.

Meanwhile the youngest of them was wearily plodding along the road and the chairs were retreating ever farther and farther in the distance till he could see them turn in behind Chao Pi, the devil screen by the gate. His little face and rich blue coat were coated with layer after layer of dust kicked into clouds by the feet of the runners. Yuen Shi, having no other place to turn, headed homeward.

All the long way in the dust of the road, his nimble wits conned his single task—the solution of his puzzle. He felt the imperative need of joining Wang Nu. How to do it? He must be one with the Crimson Eyebrows on their foray into the territory of the Yellow Bonnets—to the Sun Hsia, the three gorges of the Yangtze, a few miles above Ichang. He wanted above everything to make this voyage on the red junk for he had never been far west up his River of the Yellow Sand. He wanted to sail with Wang on the bridge, through the terrifying barrier, on to the second Chasm of the Sorceress. It was there, high on the cliffs above, so the markets and bazaars of Ichang told, that the cruel Yellow Bonnets, had their nest. It was high on these forbidding rocks that they had taken the girl, his Missy Bronze Hair, who now must be in terror like a captive water nymph of his River of the Golden Sand.

Still uncertain of the best method of ac-

complishing his purpose, Yuen arrived at his home. He found the complexion of the house strictly masculine. His mother and sisters, with the coming of the prince, had retreated to their own quarters whence no man dare intrude. But the great halls and main rooms were cluttered with servants and retainers, both of the mandarin and the prince. On the faces of all the family "boys" Yuen saw the beam of pride, the joy they took in the honor paid by the viceroy of the realm, by his very presence, in the house of Yuen they served.

Past all the guards and servants and soldiers, he crept—a tiny, blue, dust-bedraggled figure. Gliding in and out round squatted figures and beneath the legs of standing ones, he made his way through room after room and courtyard after courtyard, to the center of the house. He reached the mandarin's sanctum, his holy of holies, his study where reposed his scrolls of the ancient learnings, his finest jades, his most translucent porcelains and his favorite fans.

Into this room, dodging the tardy foot and arm outtheld to stay his entrance, Yuen darted with the flash of the golden carp in the pool of Kuei on the terrace. He entered as he wished, only to trip and almost fall over the heaps of coats which the prince had been gradually peeling and discarding from his portly person as the heat of the room and the meal he was enjoying with the mandarin, progressed.

This danger averted by the mere breath of a turtledove, Yuen Shi came afoul of a graver one. He stumbled and collided with a low, brass tray on its teakwood stand, sitting midway between the mandarin and the prince. The tray was covered with myriads of small bowls, each of the precious ware of the ancient Kwang Tung kilns; each filled to the brim with rarest appetizers, warrant of the feast to come. As he stumbled, Yuen saw their contents—from spiced and minced eggs a hundred years old, from the province of Yang Chow, to kumquats in honey from Kow Chang, headily flavored with old brandy. The prince, his eyes gleaming with epicurean delight, was loosing his girth in anticipation of the approaching banquet he foresaw, when a shadow lurched before him—crash went the tray with a small boy sprawling over its smashed porcelains and its spilled contents.

Over the gorgeous robes of state of both the prince and the mandarin went the ancient eggs, the honeyed kumquats, the snails and slugs, minced and stewed. Even over the sacred persons of these nobles, cousins of the unseeable one to the north. They gazed in horror at the daring intruder—they saw a frightened little boy. From behind his monstrous goggles, the prince's eyes gleamed humorously.

As for the old mandarin, he blushed. He caught the miscreant by his ear, he jerked him low to the floor by the feet of the prince while he profoundly, lengthily and abjectly apologized for the unspeakable insult to the dignity, not only of his own person but as well, that of the very sacred son of Heaven whom he represented. The viceroy, however, mellow in mood and with a saving Oriental sense of humor, was not to be disturbed by this boyish mishap. Instead of frowning, he touched the little Yuen on the head, as a gracious favor, with the tip of his indoor, painted fan of thinnest gauze.

"This then," he remarked, "this is the fruit of your honorable older years, Yuen Ti? May I even unworthily ask, to what is this vigorous young limb of the Tree of Yuen to be bent?"

"If I may ever so humbly admit, I had planned for him a career like my own," began the old scholar. "Unrolling in peace and happiness, the scrolls of our ancient knowledge. Though as yet, alas, the Forest of Pencils shows no signs of sprouting by the doorstep."

The prince frowned and shook his head. "Tut, tut, never! Come, reason with me, my most esteemed brother and fellow wearer of the sacred sash, this son of yours is no lad for the cloisters of the classics. Here we have a sprig of action. He should be a soldier." The prince albeit smugly, stroked the curving peacock feather that dangled over the embroidered cushion, weighted with the dignity of the coral-buttoned hat.

Yuen, despite the grip of the old mandarin's fingers at his ear, had been listening avidly. The instant he was released to his feet, he seized the heaven-sent opportunity the prince's words presented. He leaped at once, uninvited, into voicing his desire to join Wang Nu; the necessity he felt, as the son of the house of his father, of flying to the rescue of one who had ever

been graciously kind to him, who had taught him English, told him stories, especially had fired him with desire to see her own America and especially her native town.

Breathless, he was forced to pause; tense, eager he waited. To his intense relief and surprise, his father seemed on the point of yielding. He seemed about to twist his fine old head from side to side in sign of approval and consent to his son's proposition. He seemed in a mood of acquiescence rare and unexpected. The old mandarin cleared his throat to speak. Yuen's heart throbbed with joy—he knew the answer was to be yes.

But the prince leaned forward, a fat man, in a thin, white shirt of heavily-cruised silk, and lurched clumsily forward on his pile of pillows.

"If I may lowly inject my humble word, great and honorable eldest son of the distinguished Yuens, gone before to the celestial clouds, I may, even if I be not worthy to do it, suggest that what your young twig proposes is not fitting for one of his tender years. He should learn waiting until the meet time, the appointed place. Never seek trouble oversoon; it wings swallow-fast into our lives. What could he do to aid this pirate he bespeaks? A star, however willing, cannot help the moon. Send your men, your boats, all your guards and all your soldiers and mine, too, if you deem this scamp of a pirate needs assistance, which is doubtful. Rather let him fight the other band. Let one insect devour the other. But take precious care of this babe of the breast, this priceless and solitary male jewel from the womb of Yuen Ta, your most honorable wife."

**T**HE prince leaned back exhausted. The little boy's face fell. What had he now to say or urge? His father's head was jerking up and down in negation before the prince had finished his speech. The old man's words were crisp orders, sending Yuen to his room, to his neglected books and his tablets of filial piety. They fell on unheeding childish ears, for Yuen Shi stumbled, blinded by tears of disappointment, which gushed unbidden. Terror, too, filled his heart for the fate of his little Missy Bronze Hair.

Not to his room, nor to unroll his dusty scrolls, nor even to his honored white jade tablets, did the little Yuen turn his steps. Instead he stole into the garden rolling

in terraces a mile in either direction, he stole past the great gray cat chained for the house protection, by the outmost door. He absently scratched his head while he thought. Then on he went past the Goddess Kuei, carved in bronze, sunning her tortoise back in the pool down the terraces; past Chao Pi, not even circling twice to evade the spirits of evil, and on down the road toward the wharf again.

By the roadside, he grew tired. He found a flat carven stone. It had been erected long before in sorrow to engrave the memory of some loved one who had ridden too soon to the heavenly mists. Now it served Yuen as a resting place under the shade of the gnarled, old sacred Huai tree, hanging with shreds of the red cloth prayers tied to its dying limbs by worshipers. Yuen was literally seething with rage against the fat old prince.

There he sat on the tablet of memory, silently exhausting his store of Chinese phrases, expressive of his ire, his chagrin and disgust. He looked out over the river where he could see afar the plump and matronly barge of the prince riding at anchor in midstream.

Yuen had drained himself dry of native expletives, now he conjured up remembered phrases used by his Missy Bronze Hair in her rage at her brother. "The great big cheese! The big stiff," he said aloud. Then, "He thinks, the fat slob, that I should be a soldier. He wants me to stay in my tent, does he, while the battle wages? Huh! A man cannot learn to be an expert swimmer living on a mountain top."

With this he jumped to his feet, shook them well into their high clogs, made to hold his toes from the muck of the rainy season, and ran down to the wharf where the silken-sailed gig awaited the return of her master.

Into this he stopped grandly. With surprise, the dozing oarsmen waked up. "Bat-witted things," quoth Yuen in his most noble scorn. "Crawlers of the waters, quick with you—out to yonder barge. I am Yuen Shi—only son of an unworthy one of the humble house which to-day your master, the most illustrious prince regent, deigns to distinguish with his priceless presence!"

They obsequiously seated him on cushions worthy his high estate; they now bent their backs and pulled for the amazed barge. Up the hastily slung-down ladder,

Yuen Shi stalked with his grandest manner, quaking with agony lest he meet failure at the point of success.

To the master of the great man's barge, Yuen gave his stiffly elaborate orders, his child tongue princely and arrogant. The captain flew to do his bidding. The silken-sailed gig was drawn up and lashed fast, the barge set out up the shining river to Sun Hsui, to the Gorge of the Sorceress where Missy Bronze Hair lay, a prisoner of the fell Yellow Bonnets.

Reaching after some hours the terrifying barrier, Yuen grandly dismissed the barge. He had the captain call to her side first, a red boat, one of the sturdy little shells that sail the upper Yangtze, saving lives and cargoes in those treacherous waters.

Ensnored in the tiny but strong craft, Yuen pointed her nose up the river through the cleft in the mountains forming the first gorge. He urged the men of the boat to speed. On they went through these first portals to death, the men driving at their task with a will, for they knew the princeling.

Into the rocks and foamy waters of the terrifying barrier they sped. Its high steep crags were polished rock that gleamed in the western light of the now-fading day. Cliffs—they towered tall, ragged, uneven masses of red porphyry, darkening by their height the waters below, which swirled in lacy curtains about black obsidian rocks in the center of the stream. High above Yuen's little head they towered, biting the sky with their crevices filled with the turquoise blue of myriads of Chinese phlox.

Just below the second gorge the junk of the Crimson Eyebrows was anchored. Before his swift-running red boat had reached it, however, they passed many other junks, their decks piled high with the green, yellow, and orange vegetables and fruits of the upper valley, which, sheltered in the arms of the Heaven Tall Mountains, knows no winter.

Noise and chatter were dripping from these junks and floated across the stream to Yuen's ears. He saw, too, other boats, out evidently for nights of pleasure, with sounds of gongs and cymbals and high-piping human voices. The low wail of the wooden drum, *paug tsu* and the shrill screech of the slender flute, *pan kow*, breaking the stillness of the river night.

But the red-acquered junk all was

silence, her lanterns were lit to scare off the spirits of the evil dusk, but the men on her decks were going about their tasks in chastened mood, on padded feet that ill-accommodated with their reputation as the fierce pirates.

Yuen guided the red boat to the side of the junk. Grandly he drew from his neck, as he had seen his father do, the necklace of beads that he wore and presented it to the head oarsman. "Kuei will reward you eternally," he said, but he sincerely hoped that his father would not precede the goddess with dire punishment.

**A**T the head of the scarlet ladder he was met by Ling Duck, huge and only a shade less fierce than his captain, which befitted the mate of the Crimson Eyebrows. He held out a hand to the clambering boy and spoke in a tone lower than his bellowing wont.

"Your honorable face is indeed a sight for blistered eyes, young and illustrious young master, for ours is a tale dismal, true and unsuccessful."

"But Wang Nu—?"

"Alas, we attempted under his most mighty guidance to rush the circlet of huts where lives in bonds the poor girl they captured. We were met by the Yellow Bonnets in force, vile vipers of infernal pools, may their souls be strapped to the bellies of black camels ere Chang once more sheathes her claws! We tried to win our way up the rear of yon cliffs, where sleeps the sorceress eternally fidgeting in her dreams to lure unwary mariners. They were ready for us. We tried thrice to climb the slope under their blows and guns. They were above us. We failed, we fell back. One man is dead—several are wounded sore. We are indeed in desperate straits."

"Wang Nu?" interrupted Yuen in persistent demand.

"Our intrepid captain lies yonder in the cabin. He is wounded, honorable young master," began Ling Duck. But Yuen did not wait to heed his further words. He darted up the deck and dove through the door into the cabin in the poop.

There on his bunk lay Wang Nu. There his head was bandaged over his crimson eye-band, his arm slung tight against his chest wore a second bandage, its linen showing an ever-widening stain.

"Wang Nu! Oh, Wang, my best and

wisest friend, you are hurt—and still the Yellow Bonnets hold Missy Bronze Hair."

From the wooden headrest, Wang Nu raised his face, white from exertion, with eyes that lit it, still fierce and bloodshot from combat. He mutely gestured a negation, he seemed too tired to speak, but finally his lips moved. His voice was husky and low.

"I failed. That is epitaph enough. We had to try the back way. It is too stanchly guarded by the sorceress."

"But, Wang, can one not climb up the front?"

"We tried that first, my little Yuen," said Wang's voice, weak and timbreless. "But the softer slope is the only way, the cliff is too stiff. From the rear, alas, they are too well-guarded."

"Then there is no way up the cliff?" asked Yuen's disappointed tones.

"There is a path up, yes. But a man would need to be thin as a sheet of rice paper on which your father writes, as agile as an eel from the lower river reaches, as sure-footed as a goat from yonder Heaven Tall Mountains. None of my men answer that description. The path up the face of the cliff, my little Yuen, leads to the outcrop of rock midway. To the nose of the sorceress. There is no way round that jut of rock save for the ghost of one of my band. Beyond that the path turns maliciously clear and wide to the top—to command of the camp of the Yellow Bonnets. So much I saw, by my glass, trained on the cliff."

Wearily, Wang Nu closed his eyes, turned his head on his wooden pillow, weak from exertion and loss of blood. Then entered into Yuen the fever of his warrior blood, the power and weight of inborn authority which had carried his ancestors to their elected places of power. He bowed low to the almost unconscious Wang and ran out to the deck. He summoned Ling Duck from moody and low abstraction over his pipe. That man brightened; good henchman and follower as he was he needed a leader.

In a trice, preparations were made and a boat stole out from the side of the junk with Ling Duck steering, two others of the band at the oarlocks and Yuen in the bow like a coxswain urging them on. Through the thunderous dark of the treacherous waters, they drove the boat to the foot of the path up the menacing cliff.

There they beached it, grasping a coil of hempen rope, led by Yuen's youth-sure feet, they climbed steadily upward.

He had discarded the long mandarin coat of bedraggled blue, on the junk; he substituted, instead, a short jacket and trousers. On his feet were leathern sandals fringed from ship stores and doubled back to fit his small feet. On and up they went until they reached the jut of rock of which Wang had told, the impassable nose of the sorceress who snarls in her sleep.

**T**HERE Ling Duck touched little Yuen. He stopped the men to the rear with a gesture; soundlessly he motioned to the boy. He knelt on the narrow ledge of rock and bent with exquisite care over the thongs and lacings of the crimson-leather sandals. When he rose he took the coil of hempen rope from the man to the rear; one hand he held out to the boy, with the other he grasped the coil of rope.

Tight against the polished jagged rocks, Yuen pressed his small but wiry body. There were inches only beneath his feet to give him leverage to swing about the giant nose; he stepped forward, his sandal slipping on the narrow polished floor. Again Ling Duck knelt. This time he tore the crimson band from his forehead and with its pieces bound the crimson sandals. The rougher surface gave purchase that was needed. Yuen stepped, another step, one foot was around the perfidious nose of rock. Then another step, the foot following slipped, slid on the smooth treacherous edge. Yuen clung like mad to a deep-rooted bush by his finger tips. He drew the second foot around safely—the menacing corner was conquered, the turn was won at last.

Now edging closer, Ling Duck passed at arm's length, the coil of hempen rope to the boy reaching for it safe beyond the turn. He caught it but its weight slipped his baby fingers; like the stones in the path below it fell with a splash in the swirling river.

A second coil of rope, fruit of Ling's forethought, was passed in safety to the boy. He held it fast. They heard his anxious footsteps scamper up the path beyond the turn where it looped back, passing above their heads. Soon the rope was returning to them, dangling down. Testing it, Ling Duck made ascent to the tree,

round whose rock-bound roots Yuen had lashed the rope.

An urgent call went below. A man ascended and returned bearing orders from Ling Duck. The mate and the boy sat down near the great tree ringed with the rope, perched silently in the darkness of the cliff. Chang with her short, sharp claws was sinking to her early rest in the sky. Yuen was nonchalantly substituting spiced seeds he had filched from a stand that morning in town for the forgotten dinner whose pangs were becoming urgent. Meditatively he sucked the discarded sugar cane when he felt three sharp tugs on the rope over the cliff.

Ling bent and hauled up a stout ladder. The first face to appear over its top was the fierce, still-bandaged one of Wang Nu. He hove to the path and glared at Yuen and pinched his ear.

"Brat of the god of mischief, what will your father say to me of this? Will he not ask me if I so repay his honorable trust? Will he not for this remove the peachbloss of his friendship? Then shall I be indeed bowed low; me, the captain of the famous pirates, leader of the Crimson Eyebrows."

Man after man had followed their leader up the ladder; he sent them on to creep silently upward in the jet darkness of the cliff, on to the position that would command the camp of the Yellow Bonnets where Missy Bronze Hair lay a prisoner.

"And for you, Ling Duck," Wang's voice was coldly wrathful, "you shall have your punishment as well. Lover of fights, this one shall know you not. You shall sit in amah's skirts and nurse this fledgling of the war god. Save him whate'er befalls. Save him if your flesh be cut to ribbons, if your teeth be jerked from their roots, if your eyes be plucked from their sockets."

He left them and stalked upward to join his other men. He was not so strong and vibrant as usual, but all the same he was a fine figure of a man, a gentleman, and a pirate.

Then to the waiting ears below drifted sounds of conflict. There were screams and cries of surprise, of rage, of terror; the clash of blade on blade, of boom of gun and crash of rocks, of intensive conflict unmingled with human voices. Finally, to the hopeful ears, there came a triumphant cry—to the eager two, it seemed to be Wang's voice.

Yuen darted; he eluded Ling's arms, he started for the top of the cliff with the man after him. He sped ever ahead to the top to find Wang Nu—and victory.

Below, on the flat of the cliff with its gentle slope, was the Yellow Bonnet camp. There, too, were their gardens, where they raised vegetables and grain for the times they dared not foray forth to rob the farms and plantations. Now the huts and houses were crackling and blazing, throwing the weird goblinlike shadows to play on the wall of stone, lighting the scene with a rosy glow and giving the rocks a tone that rivaled the crimson lake among Yuen's painted pots.

Best of all he saw the fire glow light up the bronze curls of his beloved missy free and unhurt. Her hair was burnished as the river spray is gilded in the springtime sun. Yuen ran forward to be caught in her arms.

"Oh, you dear, you little Yuen Shi—how did you get here? What happened to you, kid? Did they get you, too? Look how they treated little me. Tied me up." She showed a bruised wrist and then looked to one side of the clearing. There in the firelight Yuen saw a row of trussed-up figures, men who looked like fowls ready for old Ah Yet's roasting spit.

The little boy suddenly felt tired. He had a warm glow at the finished conflict, he felt glad of the recovery of little Missy Bronze Hair. But all he really wanted was his own little room at home with its roll of soft, white, warmed matting. He wanted opportunity to sink into oblivion. First though he longed to smack this audacious daughter of another world for the way she had dared a milieu that she could never understand, to daunt the hills that have imperiled people for years beyond men's telling. He only crept very close into her arms, nestled close and closed his eyes.

**H**e did not even open them when sounds were heard at the foot of the gentle slope. Below there were roars of men going into furious action, war cries of guards, clashes of cymbals, clang of gongs, and roll of drums. Wang Nu's men sprang from their task of rounding up the property lying loose, to recover their discarded arms.

But it was only the old mandarin, who, on his own feet, having abandoned his

sedan chair below, was leading the men and guards and soldiers. He saw Wang Nu; he smiled slightly.

"Ah, my friend, I see you have preceded me. You have most honorably forestalled my own humble and unworthy effort." The mandarin pointed to the several hundred men who followed him. "Still, we came rapidly up the river."

"The insect who travels alone makes ten paces. In the tail of the steed it travels ten thousand miles," replied the pirate.

"True, but come, Wang Nu, why not go home? The Stocktons are worried. No news may be flower sweet, meaning only joy, but it is torture to endure. Let us not wait. My little Shi already slumbers. And the honorable miss should be taken at once in my chair to the barge. Yes, my lad sleeps—it is well he does, once in a while. Else we would all grow old sooner."

Wang's men were slinging the trussed-up Yellow Bonnets over their shoulders like meat quarters for market. One of the Crimson Eyebrows offered to take little Yuen, but Wang anticipated the move. In his one strong arm, he caught the sleepy lad from the girl and cuddling him close, prepared to descend.

"And the Prince Chang?" He turned to the mandarin. "Where is our great and redoubtable warrior prince to-night?"

"Ah, Wang, I thought better of you," gently chided the old scholar. "The way is overlong, the prince has journeyed far to-day, he has dined long if humbly at my unworthy table. Let me not disgrace my salt. I alone am to blame for this viper's nest on Sorceress Gorge. We must sweep our own doorways clear from snow before we worry about the hoar frost that glitters on our neighbor's tiles!"

With a sleepy grunt, Yuen nestled closer as Wang deposited him between the old man and the girl in the great chair. Missy Bronze Hair offered her hand, boyishly, in American fashion. Wang took it and bowed over the scarred wrist like the gentleman he was. Then the chair moved off through the night, followed by screams and cries of the guard and undertoned with the singsong of the runners.

Wang stood still a minute, smiling. Then he retraced his steps up the bloody slope where his men were awaiting him, to return to the famous red-lacquered junk anchored in the stream below.



# Smelling Danger

By Lawrence G. Green



Bond proves that the sea holds more odors than its own.

**H**OW the memories of old voyages come flooding back when you breathe for a moment that strange, strong odor which clings to all ships! Richard Bond could have told you that it was a compound of many odors. His mind rejoiced in identifying every scent he encountered—a useful occupation for a navigator, and a fitting one for a man with a thin nose springing out of a sunburned, well-traveled-sailor's face.

As the *Oakdale's* anchor broke out of the west African mud and the decks above the engines began to tremble, Bond streamed the log line over the stern and hurried toward the bridge. During the fraction of a minute between the stern and the bridge ladder, Bond lost his peace of mind. He was in the chart house before he realized it. Scarcely breathing, he stood there in that agony of suspense in which the mind refuses to work and leaves

thinking to the forces of the subconscious. Astern, the low green-and-white coast, the houses and wharf of Takorah were sliding away. The *Oakdale*, New York to Cape Town with general cargo, was thrusting into a sea that lay blue to the horizon. That should have been good, for Takorah—with its lemon-colored Frenchmen, its heat and its fevers—was not a port loved by sailormen. Yet Bond had suddenly scented danger. Ah! That was it. He had smelled something that suggested a menace to the ship, to the safety of all on board. His power of distinguishing odors, a sense grown far beyond the normal, had warned him clearly enough. But what odor? A bloodhound, this Bond. He would be restless and unhappy until the mystery cleared.

One by one he checked the possibilities. He had been the first to detect the faint smoky haze that drifted out of the hold,

homeward bound, on the last voyage, when the wool started to smolder. Not fire this time, though. Surely the old *Oakdale* ought to have left her troubles farther north—there had been enough of them. Storm off Morocco, the cargo shifting, crates of motor cars crashing into cases of gin—a bad mixture that reeked in his sensitive nostrils as he remembered it. Then fog among the islands. They would have rammed Grand-Canary but for Bond smelling the land and the orange trees through the white blindness ahead, and ringing for full astern in time. Now his nose had turned him into a bundle of strained nerves without directing his brain—an important part of the reaction.

So Bond searched his memory for a clue. He could not report to the master that there was danger on board, a sinister presence which he found impossible to describe. All he knew was that it was an odor. Absurd, on the face of it; for here was the *Oakdale* rolling along in the swell of the Bight at the solemn speed of eight knots, with every prospect of fair weather. The hidden things that seaman dread were not in this ocean.

Yet Bond trusted his nose as surely as a connoisseur of wines trusts his palate. Why, he could tell a shipmate in the darkness by the scent every man has of his own. This one used bay rum on his hair, another brilliantine, a third carried strong South African tobacco in his pouch, a fourth could be identified yards away by the oil that had saturated his engine room overalls. Bond followed the line of thought carefully until there formed a slight idea that became a conviction. He knew that the smell a little while before would have meant nothing, now it promised disaster. That only made him more uneasy.

**B**OND knew that some odors pleased him while others irritated; not always because they were in essence either fragrant or bad, but because of their associations. He placed the cities and the calling places of the world by their smells. London was the musty gray breath of old age, shot through with whiffs of petrol; and he liked it. Marseilles was garlic and shellfish; the recollection made him hungry, for he had dined well on the Cannebiere. When coffee beans were roasting, good beans, he thought of Rio. The sharp redolence of chemicals always called

up Rotterdam and the river where his ship had once rested idle for days beside a chemical factory. Ammonia suggested guano, the lonely bird islets of the Chile coast, sailing-ship days; he would shiver at some memory of the Horn. Timber, fresh-cut pine, and he was alongside the busy wharves of Vancouver again. Zanzibar he could tell if you brought him there blindfolded—twenty miles out at sea, with an offshore breeze, he could suck in the sweet scent of a million clove trees.

He could find his way about queer foreign cities with the aid of this keen sense, labeling each street by its own peculiar smell. Once, led into a trap by a villainous guide, he had fought free and sniffed his way back safely to the salt pungency of the water front. Houses, cargoes, the peoples of the world—all were catalogued in Bond's mind as odors rather than as shapes or sounds. He could have written out a list of them—a seaman's odorographia. The scents used by women made him dream; a bloodhound was Bond, but human. And all this store of experience was at his command to save the ship. He was certain that the unknown thing was as serious as that—safety or disaster.

Then, into his brooding, flashed a strong light. He must turn in his tracks and see whether that lost and indefinable scent could be picked up again. A man who leaves a room meaning to do some little thing, and forgets what it was, may stimulate his memory in the same way.

As Bond wandered slowly toward the bridge ladder the ocean smell leaped at him. This was clean and purifying. It surrounded and isolated the ship; it would help him in his task, just as an olive sweeps the palate clear of other flavors before an exquisite meal. Nevertheless it would not be easy to recapture that faint danger scent—there were so many ship odors to complicate the search.

Lounging in deck chairs on the thwart-ship bunker hatch Bond saw, and smelt, the master and the chief engineer—a pleasant blend of Dutch cheroot and German lager. Yes, the chief had just emptied his glass. An oily winch next, and steam pipes. Steam, by some twist of the nerves, was not so much a smell as a feeling that struck sharply into Bond's sensitive gums.

A stoker, emptying ash down the chute, brought with him the stokehole smell—

singed flesh and coal dust. The warm ash scraped down the chute to fall hissing into the sea; and Bond leaned over the rail, wondering for a moment whether the secret might not be there. Then he laughed grimly at himself and walked on. It was an odor he was seeking, and he would not find it in the friendly sea.

To leeward of the galley, hung a thick aroma of frying potatoes and roasting meat. Bond held his breath there, and gulped in the salt atmosphere to clear his nostrils of anything that might dull the membrane. An alleyway lay ahead, with the cabins of the engineers opening into it. The second was evidently fond of bananas; yes, a ripening bunch swung from the bulkhead. Snakes, scorpions, and spiders sometimes come to sea with bunches of bananas. Had he smelled some poisonous little stowaway? Bond closed his eyes and moved his head slowly from side to side. Nothing. He peered into the bananas and verified his decision.

**A**CROSS the well deck blew the ocean smell again, with ship odors like patches on a clean sheet. Decomposing rubbish awaited dumping—harbor muck which Bond raked idly with his foot, as though the end of his quest lay hidden in this heap of potato skins, sawdust, and strands of rope. The boatswain lurched past; a silent Norwegian who had just eaten a tin of sardines as a snack—the oil was still on his fingers. Grease and oil in the air; a man from the engine room blinking in the sunlight after his watch. Paraffin—an able seaman with newly trimmed lamps. But never a scent to bring out Bond's suspicions afresh; nothing that he could fasten on and raise the alarm.

They drink hard in west Africa. Bond, down in the semigloom, clambered over cases of whisky, beer, and gin—that terrible devastating gin called "square-face," which had evidently tempted some black stevedore into the crime of cargo broaching. The harsh fumes of it drowned other smells for a time. Then Bond sniffed the salt-pork barrels, the great tubs of cheese. Never a general cargo leaves the northern lands without bottles being smashed, tins damaged. In the *Oakdale's* after-hold jams,

molasses, and fats mingled their flavors with the businesslike smell of new machinery, bales of cloth, blankets, and glassware, rubber tires and tin. But nothing reeked of peril.

He was tired, not only from the effort of crawling about the hold, but tired in his mind. His brain was refusing to remain in that receptive state essential to a successful search for the unknown. He leaned against a ventilator, resting—not one of the hold ventilators, but a smaller one sending air into the boatswain's store. It occurred to Bond that he had not visited this store, with its drums of paint and red lead, canvas and hawsers. But what danger could lurk there? Bond turned to the open mouth of the ventilator, drawing in his breath lazily. Then he stood rigid, triumphant. He had found the odor, identified it in a second. Was the door of the store shut? Good—he would stand guard over it as a precaution. "The doctor—send the doctor here quick," Bond ordered a deck hand.

The ship's surgeon, who was neither young and inexperienced nor old and drunken, came at once. Bond flung the door open and shouted.

"All right—shut him in again," said the surgeon coolly, staring at the Negro who had risen painfully from his hiding place behind a heap of canvas. "There may be mosquitoes about, and they would carry yellow fever about the ship in no time. Quite a nice case—well advanced."

Yellow fever! The scourge that has killed thousands of good sailormen and set fine ships adrift like derelicts across the ocean because no man could take the wheel. With that sick stowaway on board the *Oakdale* would have been quarantined in every healthy port; her crew would have gone over the side, one by one, with fire bars at their feet.

"How did you spot him?" asked the captain, after he had turned the ship around for Takorah to disembark the danger.

"By the odor," replied Bond simply. "You can't mistake the acrid odor of a Negro, once you get it in your nostrils. I was puzzled at first, but I went back and found him."

He breathed in the salt tang of the ocean gratefully, peace of mind restored.



# The Log Book

This department is a meeting place for all readers of this magazine. It is free to all for the purpose of open discussion on topics concerning the sea.

**W**HEN the *Titanic* sank in 1912 she caused a disturbance that is still affecting the shipping world. She was then the largest ship afloat, and her maiden trip was heralded with a great flourish of publicity in the daily press on both sides of the Atlantic. The eyes of the world were on her as she left port for her first trip across the western ocean. Because of this, perhaps, the shock of her destruction was greater, attended as it was by appalling loss of life. No expense had been spared in making her the largest and finest vessel in existence, and when she struck an iceberg on her fateful first voyage shipping men sat up, rubbed their horror-stricken eyes, and gasped. Evidently something was wrong with the entire scheme of things in their circle of activity if such accidents could happen.

As a direct result of this accident leading maritime nations were invited to send representatives to a conference at London for the purpose of revising the rules and regulations governing ship construction and operation of ocean-going shipping. Unfortunately the conference did not go into session until nearly two years after the *Titanic* disaster. No one, however, could be blamed for this, as assembling such a body of men entailed an incredible amount of time and labor. So the International Conference on the Safety of Life at Sea came into being in 1913.

The outbreak of the World War in

1914 brought an end to its labors before they had time to remedy the evils they discovered in shipping affairs. Before their sessions broke up they were able to institute a few reforms, chief among which was the north Atlantic ice patrol. This is the work which is carried out by the United States revenue cutter service. It is paid for by a joint fund, subscribed to by the leading maritime nations using the north Atlantic steamer lanes.

The function of the International Conference was to have been nonlegislative. Its meetings were convened solely for the purpose of discussing ways and means of promoting safety at sea. The total results of these discussions were to have been included in one report, copies of which were to have been sent to each of the represented countries. The law-making bodies of these nations would then have incorporated the suggestions in their statute books or not as they saw fit.

With the war at an end there was nothing to hinder the resumption of this work, and so another session of the conference was convened in London in the spring of 1929. At the final meeting, held May 31st, the convention was signed by representatives of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Irish Free State, Italy, India, Netherlands, Japan, Norway, Sweden, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States.

The work covered at this meeting in-

cluded water-tight subdivision of ships—taking up this work where it was left off in 1913, life-saving appliances, wireless telegraphy, fire-extinguishing apparatus, and regulations for preventing collisions at sea. There was no discussion of load lines because the Board of Trade had already instituted a separate inquiry into that question. They had circulated their findings on load lines in a private report which was circulated among the member nations of the conference.

Under the heading of rules for the prevention of collisions at sea we come to one item which directly concerns almost every seafaring man in the deck department of ships to-day. It is as follows:

ARTICLE 41. *Helm Orders.* The contracting governments agree that after midnight on June 30, 1931, helm or steering orders, i. e., orders to the steersman, shall in all their ships be given in the direct sense, e. g., when the ship is going ahead an order containing the word starboard or right, or any equivalent of starboard or right, shall only be used when it is intended, in ships as at present generally constructed and arranged, that the wheel, the rudder blade, and the head of the ship shall move to the right.

All of you who have been to sea know that in ocean-going vessels the wheel and the ship's head move in the same direction—if the wheel is turned to starboard the bow moves in that direction also. But steering orders, in most ships using the high seas to-day, are always given indirectly. "Port your helm," says the watch officer. Obedient to the command the helmsman turns the wheel to *starboard*—the ship's head moving in that direction also. Under the new rule the watch officer would say, "Starboard your helm."

The old system of helm orders obtains in most ships, the only exceptions we can think of being the United States navy and German mercantile and naval vessels. We are informed that the change is being made in the interests of safety at sea, but the statement seems misleading, for even our own navy, which has used the new system for a number of years, does not appear to be free from mishaps.

Seafaring men both here and in Great Britain are protesting against the change, and naturally, for they are the ones it affects most strongly. There are thousands of officers at sea to-day who have been trained under the old system and have practiced it for years. There are thousands of

helmsmen who have used the old system for years. These have become so used to helm orders that they react automatically to them; they do not have to think when giving or taking orders concerning steering. But with the new system we cannot help but feel that all this has been changed. Each officer will have to pause and think before giving an order, the helmsman will also have to stop and think. And it is quite likely that this will happen in many cases of emergency, where speedy thinking and acting will be at a premium.

Of course a new generation of officers will be ready to stand watches in some ships by the time the new rules go into effect, for all the sea apprentices already undergoing their training will be instructed in the new system. But they will not so frequently find themselves in a position where prompt action will count for so much.

It may be possible that the new orders will be a benefit to the American merchant marine because of standardization. As things are now we have three system of steering and helm orders in this country. The navy uses the new system that will go into general effect in 1931, the seagoing merchant marine uses the old style orders, and river and harbor steamers have a separate system of their own. This is because they have their steering gear so arranged that the wheel works in the opposite direction to the ship's head.

Whatever may be our feelings in regard to the helm orders we must not lose sight of the good work done by the International Conference. There is no doubt of the fact that they are striving for and have achieved the greatest good for the greatest number of those who use the sea. They cannot eliminate accidents entirely; we will always have those as long as we are dependent upon the human element. But they can be relegated to the realm of a remote possibility and they have been so treated. Even in a case like that of the *Vestris* we must remember that she was built before the International Conference was convened in 1913.

**H**ERE is a letter from the Colonies that is chock-full of information for various shipmates, and of interest to most of the readers as well. Shipmate Johnston, of Melbourne, Australia, is a very ardent correspondent in spite of his distance from us, and we feel sure that all

hands owe him a vote of thanks for his interest in this department.

Shipmate Johnston mentions the *Star of Russia* in his letter. We believe that this was the ship which lost a whole watch overboard one night off the Horn. Should we be wrong in this belief we hope any shipmate who can do so well will correct us.

Speaking of stiffening in this letter, it is surprising that some of the old-timers haven't come aft to kick about ballast logs. Have you all forgotten those blessings of a windjammer's harbor existence?

We notice that our shipmate speaks of his fear of belaying pins. We wish to reassure you, Shipmate Johnston, there are no belaying pins in this hooker. The Log Book of this magazine is a sort of sailor's paradise, described by John Masefield in his poem "Port of Many Ships."

The winds is never nothin' more than jest light airs,

'N' no one gets belayin'-pinned, 'n' no one never swears;

Ye're free to loaf an' laze around, yer pipe between yer lips,

Lollin' on the fo'c's'le, sonny, lookin' at the ships.

When I opened the Log Book of the December number I noticed a few remarks that have prompted me to come aft for a yap. If I yap too much, you've only got to tap me with a belaying pin and I'll pipe down.

Starting from the front, Shipmate Cairney states that there was only one line of sailing ships to bear the names of the Scottish lochs. This is wrong. There were at least three lines, to my knowledge—Aitken Lilburn's line of Glasgow wool clippers; Sproat's line of iron clipper barks, like *Loch Dee*, *Loch Urr*, *Loch Trool*, and so forth; there was also the Loch line of J. & R. Wilson, also in the Colonial trade, and one of their old ships is still afloat and trading out of Finland. She is the *Loch Linnhe*.

Next I'd like to thank you, skipper, for defending British ships in that argument on the disgraceful food and living conditions in line-jugers. True, there were some very bad cases afloat in the '80s and '90s, but for the most part there was nothing wrong with the Britishers. I'd back ships of such lines as the *Lochs*, Carmichael's Golden Fleece line, the Aberdeen line, Brocklebank's, and Milne's *Invers*—to mention just a few—against any Yankee ship on the subject of eats. Well, we'll let that drop, eh?

Shipmate Webb wants some information about the old *Star of Bengal* and the *Star of Italy*. The first-named was a beautiful iron ship of one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven tons register. She was too hundred and eighty feet long, forty feet beam, and twenty-three feet six inches deep. She had a very fine-lined hull and a contemporary account states that "She was very wet if at all pressed, and in a scaway shipped no end of water."

Her lower and topmasts were in one, and from the heel of the mainmast to the topmast head she measured one hundred and thirty-two feet six inches, while the head of her mainsail measured ninety-four feet. You can see from these figures that she carried a huge spread of canvas.

The *Star of Bengal* required two hundred tons of stiffening and would carry a deadweight of two thousand five hundred and thirty tons. Her maiden voyage was a great performance. She left London on April 25, 1874, and dropped the pilot off Start Point the next day. She arrived at Melbourne after a very good passage of seventy-eight days. While running her casting down she lost nearly all her wire running rigging, which delayed her for a week, and she finally had to finish the passage with her royal yards on deck.

She was a very tender ship. From Melbourne she ran across to Frisco in fifty-eight days, loaded wheat, and went home in one hundred and eleven days from the Golden Gate. She was a regular and very popular trader in the Calcutta and Colonial trades until June, 1898, when she was sold to a Frisco firm, who later disposed of her to the Alaska Packers Association.

In September of 1908 she went ashore on Coronation Island, Alaska, when loaded with fifty thousand cases of salmon. It was a terrible tragedy, for one hundred and ten lives were lost, only twenty-seven being saved. Her sister ship, *Star of Russia*, is, I believe, still afloat as a hulk.

The *Star of Italy* was launched at Belfast late in 1877, and was reckoned to be a faster ship than the *Bengal*. She was a sister ship to the *Star of France*. I am told that both these ships are still afloat, though laid up. If Shipmate Webb would care to write to me, I could give him a lot more information of the passages of his old ships, also some photographs.

Now for one last remark. Shipmate J. C. Johnston wants to know the fate of the two ships, *Lumberman's Lassie* and *Windsor Castle*. The latter vessel was launched by Duthie, of Aberdeen, in 1869 for Donaldson, Rose & Co., of Aberdeen, as a small nine-hundred-and-seventy-nine-ton ship. She was sold to different owners later and renamed *Lumberman's Lassie*, eventually becoming a coal hulk.

Well, I find that I didn't get a belaying pin at my head, after all, eh? But I suppose I'd better get forward before you get irisky.

GEORGE H. JOHNSTON.

**S**HIPMATE MUNRO has sent us the following interesting letter about the steamer *State of California* which was asked about in the Log Book recently. At the time this ship was asked for we mentioned several others which we thought, due to the similarity of their names, were the ones that were meant. However, Mr. Munro leaves no doubt that the ship he speaks of is the right one. Perhaps some of the other readers know what eventually became of this old veteran. On behalf of

Mr. Ryan we extend our thanks to Shipmate Munro for the complete manner in which he has answered the inquiry for this vessel.

In connection with Mr. John Ryan's letter in the Log Book of your January issue, I have some information that might be of interest to him.

The steamship *State of California* was ordered by the old State line, of Glasgow, from Alexander Stephens & Sons, Ltd., of Linthouse yard, and was launched by them in 1892 or 1893, I am not sure which. The building of the *State of California* broke the State line, and this vessel lay in an incomplete condition in the Queen's Dock for about a year. J. & A. Allan, Ltd.—the Allan line—finally bought her, along with the other ships of the State line.

The Allans ran her on the New York run until 1903, when she was wrecked on Sable Island. She was repaired in this country and was sold to American owners and had her name changed to *Californian*, under which name she only made two or three trips—Glasgow to New York. I understand she was ultimately sold to the Porto Rico line, who changed her name to *Coamo*. She sailed under that name until the new *Coamo* was put in service.

The *State of California* was of about four thousand eight hundred tons. She had three masts and was square-rigged on the foremast. She had one great big oval funnel which carried the State line colors—buff, with a narrow red stripe and black top. As an Allan liner her funnel was red with a white band and black top. The skipper during her entire career for the Allan line was Braes. I understand, however, that Captain Braes was ashore the trip she was wrecked.

I was an interested spectator of the operation of stripping her of the yards. After these were removed they lay for many years at Plantation Quay, Glasgow. I always consider that day as actually marking the end of the sailing-vessel era.

The State line operated the following steamers: *State of California*, *State of Nevada*, *State of Nebraska*, *State of Pennsylvania*, *State of Georgia*, *State of Florida*.

The Allans retained the *California* and *Nebraska* and sold all the rest, two of which were purchased by the United States navy as auxiliaries and are still in use.

The Anchor line have had three *Californias*. I do not know what happened to the first, but the second was on the rocks of the Donegal coast when the war broke out in 1914. She was raised, repaired, and acted as a transport for about two years when she was torpedoed. The present *California* is a fine single-funnelled turbine steamer and a great favorite on the Glasgow run and cruises.

I am not aware that the Cunard line ever had a steamer named *California*. The White Star line did have a four-masted sailing vessel of that name, but she has gone the way of all good sailers long ago.

As the *Coamo*, the *State of California* sailed up to about three years ago when the present

ship of the name was built. I do not know what the Porto Rico line did with her, but she certainly had a very useful life of about thirty-five years.

I trust this will help Shipmate Ryan and also elicit some more information and data regarding the *State of California*, *Californian*, and *Coamo*.

JAMES C. MUNRO.

**S**HIPMATE GREEN has a few remarks to make concerning Don Waters' recent article about the Plimsoll mark of ships. In an earlier comment in this number we made a slight comment on this feature of shipping. It is strange that so little attention to loading regulation has been made by the various maritime nations. England, of course, had the Plimsoll mark, but even then the loading of ships has been abused. The Plimsoll mark has been changed and tampered with by various legislations in the last few decades. And British ships to-day still get in trouble through overloading.

Many nations have no overloading regulations, although the British Board of Trade is at present studying the situation with a view to remedying the evil for all time. It is interesting, as Shipmate Green points out, to see that the safe loading of ships was a serious matter with the ancients of ocean commerce. We are inclined to view all their efforts in navigation and construction of ships with a great deal of scorn, especially when we consider the scientific research that is applied to these problems to-day.

I have been reading the article entitled "At the Water Line," by Don Waters, in the February number of your magazine.

The matter of the load water line of vessels for safety was a matter of consideration even in ancient days.

Jal, a writer of the fourteenth century, writing about 1350, quotes laws on the depths to which galleys could be loaded. These statutes were as follows: All ships must have an iron plate attached to the side to mark the draft. These marks must be placed just below the *contant*. The lower edge of the *contant* shall be taken to mark the draft if this iron plate is wanting. The water line shall never be above the lower edge of the *contant*. These iron plates shall be affixed by the two officers charged with the measurement of galleys.

It seems that these two officers, stationed at each port, had the same relation to shipping that the steamboat-inspection service has to-day.

Vessels were built at that time with a *ceint* or strake around the side of the ship just above the normal water line to strengthen the hull and prevent injury when alongside a dock; something of the same kind is built into tow-

boats now. From the *ceint* up to the outer edge of the deck was the *contout*.

I thought that this might be of some interest as a supplement to Mr. Waters' article.

FRANCIS V. GREEN.

**W**ELL, here are the Lakers coming aft with their growls, showing that they are very little different from their brothers on salt water. Some of you may remember that we discussed the problem of Lake stories in a recent issue, and that we promised you several of them through the winter. However, you mustn't be too hard on us, for we never have sailed on the Lakes and so are not familiar with their way of doing things. Although we do know that Lake customs are vastly different from those of salt water.

Never having written to the Log Book, I am not sure of the address, but I have been sailing for the past ten years—and most of my time has been spent on our inland waters, namely, the Great Lakes.

I wish to thank Arthur Keith Henney for his story of the Lakes, "Through Keeweenaw." It was very interesting, but if the author doesn't mind my mentioning it, I wish he would brush up some, so to speak, on his Lake facts.

On page 78 in the December issue, his story reads, "As soon as we got rid of the passengers we crossed to Superior to take on our cargo farther down." The passenger boats of the Great Lakes Transit Corporation do not go to Superior for cargo. What little they carry they get at the passenger dock.

Next, his Captain Trinder is supposed to be an old-timer on the Lakes. Then why have him make such a blunder as to even attempt to beat the tri-stackers to piers, as we call them? He also speaks of the tri-stack boat, which I presume he is linking with the Pittsburgh Steamship Co., coming through the piers in a lubberly manner, especially when they are coming in and out of port.

These ships are all commanded by experienced captains and steered by experienced wheelmen, and, furthermore, there is no room, coming in the Duluth piers, for a ship to come in any way but clean and straight unless she wants to lose a few plates. Also, later on, on page 81, he said the "Old Man could have anchored and waited for the fog to lift."

He was then five hours from the west entrance. Good Lord! How many fathoms of anchor chain do you think a ship carries, man? Where that ship was supposed to have been there is close to six hundred fathoms of water. I don't wonder that the Old Man continued on his course! And when the captain could see the light on the breakwater why didn't he take his ship in? A good Lake captain would have done so.

I don't want to do any more kicking so I'll stop. But, Mr. Arthur Keith Henney, don't stop your stories about the Great Lakes just because I found fault. I do enjoy reading them. I should

like to see a Lake story in every issue. If you have room for this long-winded letter, please publish it, captain, in behalf of the wheelmen of the Lakes.

E. S. REED.

**N**OT long ago we made the remark that Nourse's coolie ships were the last merchant vessels to be equipped with studding sails, and that we thought they were never fitted to four-masted barks. You will notice that we did not make a positive statement. In order to make such an assertion we would have had to see every ship that sailed the high seas in the last few decades. However, we are glad to hear from Shipmate Scott who has kindly corrected us. You will notice that Mr. Scott speaks of the Calcutta pilot brigs. How many of you readers remember them and the capable men who used to take sailing ships in and out of the dangerous mouths of the Hooghly?

I have been reading SEA STORIES for a good many years, especially the Log Book. When I came to your recent article on studding sails I felt that I had to stick my oar in.

You say you don't believe that four-masters ever carried studding sails? Well, I was in one—the *Armada*, of Glasgow. She carried them on the fore as high as the topgallant yard. She carried no skysails and had no royal studding sails. She did not carry swinging or Bentineck hooms for the lower sails, so they were cut triangularly, the lower corner being sheeted in abreast the fore rigging.

Otherwise she was about the same as the ship on the cover of the February number. Being built about '87, she had double topsails, but the topmast studding sails were in one piece. She was the only four-master I ever saw that carried them. As a matter of fact, they were pretty scarce in the '80s.

In the old packet and clipper-ship days, when sailing ships carried mail and passengers and a fast ship paid, they were pretty common. But after steamers came it did not pay to drive a windjammer, so studding sails went out of date.

There were two pilot brigs in Calcutta that carried them way into the '90s, but they also carried about as many lascars as a two-thousand-ton ship had real sailors—and the brigs were only little vessels, too. The *Armada* also carried save-alls or sails between the foot of the topgallant sails and the upper topsails. She had a Scots captain who was surely trying to save all the wind he could.

SAMUEL R. SCOTT.

**W**E publish here a letter from Shipmate Johnston, of St. John, N. B.—not to be confused with the other Shipmate Johnston, whose letter also appears in this issue. This Mr. Johnston's letter is one of appreciation for information gained through the Log Book. He



also explains how a third *Sovereign of the Seas* came to be reported as lost off the Jersey coast.

I want to send my greetings to the captain and crew of SEA STORIES. I also want to express my thanks for the prompt reply to my query by Mr. Victor Grothe. Definite information will help us all out in our researches for the facts of the passing of the windjammers.

I want to add to the information given by Mr. Halls in answer to Mr. Seagrave regarding the *Sovereign of the Seas*. I have a record of a third *Sovereign of the Seas*. She was built in east Boston in 1868. Her dimensions were as follows: One thousand five hundred and two tons, one hundred and ninety-nine feet in length, forty-one feet beam, and twenty-three feet four inches deep. She was built for Lawrence Giles & Co., of New York, by Donald McKay and was sold to the Germans. She was registered in Vegesack in 1887 and from Bremen in 1896. Her name was changed to *Elvira*, and she foundered at sea in 1905.

Mr. John Ryan wants news of the steamship *State of California*. This ship was built at Glasgow in 1891 by Stephen & Sons, Ltd. She was two thousand six hundred and seventy tons net register, three hundred and eighty-five feet long, forty-six feet beam, and twenty-nine feet seven inches deep. She did not fly the Anchor or the Cunard flag, but she was operated by the Allan line. She ran to the St. Lawrence in summer and to Portland, Maine, in the winter as the *Californian*. She was later sold to the New York & Porto Rico Steamship Co., of New York, and renamed *Coamo*. This company used her until 1923, when she was broken up. The Allan line later merged with the Canadian Pacific, which to-day ranks as one of the best.

J. C. JOHNSTON.

**H**ERE is another letter from Australia. Shipmate Ridge, of Melbourne, has a few remarks to make concerning windjammers at present trading to the Colonies. We wish that some of you will write to him, as he seems to want to hear from shipmates in other parts of the world.

We have now in Melbourne the two Finnish barks *Melbourne—ex-Gustave*—and the *Pommern*. The *Melbourne* arrived here one hundred and eleven days out from Oslo, and the *Pommern* eighty-seven days out from the same port.

We also await the arrival of the *Herzogin Cecilie*, which left Oslo five days later than *Pommern*.

We are anxiously awaiting word of the *Viking*. She was recently bought by Captain Erikson, of Mariehamn, and placed in the Australian trade. She is making her first voyage to Melbourne under her new ownership.

I should very much like to correspond with any young fellow who is interested in sailing vessels. I am very much taken with them my-

self. My address is 30 Elster Avenue, Gardenvale, Melbourne, Australia.

As to your magazine, I think it is the best I have ever seen.

R. RIDGE.

**A**ND now we have another sailor coming aft with a kick. In part we agree with him. Our reason for qualifying our attitude toward this letter is that many of you do not realize that the vernacular of the sea is changing with the changing times and methods that we hear about.

It is quite true that we rarely hear any one speak of ropes on board a modern steamer. But in the sailing ship era things were considerably different. In sailing ships we would frequently hear such expressions as the following: "He can't pull his weight on a rope." "He don't know the ropes."

And "lines" was not the only euphemism for ropes in sailing ships either. When the Old Man wanted to go about he did not tell the mate to "See the lines clear for going about." Instead he said, "See the gear clear for going about, mister." And when the operation was completed it was, "Coil up the gear."

The vernacular of the sea which is rapidly becoming a lost language, even to modern seafarers, is not only confined to ropes. Your sailor to-day has absolutely no idea of what "dandyfunk," "dog's body," and "Harriet Lane" are.

Although not a constant reader of your magazine, I, being a seafarer, enjoy an occasional copy. I noticed in your Log of the December number a shipmate or two coming aft with growls about the landlubber language that is being used in the magazine.

I readily agree with the boys—this is a sea-going magazine, so its authors should use sea-going talk.

I also noticed the term "rope" being used in several of your stories. I have yet to hear an honest-to-goodness sailor call a line a rope. The only time I ever heard rope mentioned is when referring to rope yarn.

Being as I just signed on, I will not mention the numerous faults I encountered in your stories. Perhaps you may think me fresh for speaking my mind, but what good is a sailor that can't kick?

GEORGE C. NASH.

**S**HIPMATE OVERGAARD should be pleased with the prompt and detailed replies to his request for information concerning one of his old ships. The following letter was sent us by Shipmate Hal McCaule and he seems to have complete and authoritative dope on this ship.

I read your magazine quite often and never fail to read the Log Book.

In reading the last issue I saw Shipmate Overgaard's letter. I take the privilege of calling him shipmate, for I am a sailor myself, but not an old sailor, for I've only been going to sea for three years. Shipmate Overgaard wants to know what became of the Danish bark *Prins Waldemar*.

I have some pictures of her, taken while I was in the United States coast guard, after she went aground at low tide while entering the channel at Miami, Florida, in 1925.

She heeled over and blocked the channel for quite a while, holding up shipping there. She was salvaged, and her hull was thrown on a shoal across from the Bay Front Park. Her hulk lay there close to the hulk of the kaiser's yacht *Nahab* for two years. Then she was bought, and now she lies alongside the dock at Bay Front Park, converted into an aquarium.

Possibly some one might want to know what became of the five-master *Rose Mahoney*, of San Francisco, California. I don't know whether or not she'd be interesting, but she also ended up in Miami, in the hurricane of 1924. She was driven bow first upon the beach and nearly onto Biscayne Boulevard. She has just been broken up recently.

I hope this information is what Shipmate Overgaard wants.

HAL McCAUDLE.

**N**OT long ago we spoke of the *Liverpool* as being, at the time she was built, the largest three-masted full-rigged ship afloat. Apparently we were wrong about this statement, for Shipmate Henry Malmsten has written in to correct us. The *Liverpool* was a four-masted full-rigged ship, not a three-master. We have always confused this vessel with the *British Isles*, which we believe at one time held the reputation of being the largest three-masted ship in the world.

Some of you may remember that in the same issue in which we made the above-mentioned comment we also spoke of a big Leyland ship which was wrecked on the northwest coast some time around 1904 or 1905. This ship was the *Speke*, a very large three-masted full-rigged ship. Perhaps some of you know something about her.

Most of these very large ships seem to have been pursued by an evil fate. The five-masted Rickmers' ships were all lost, so was the *France* and the larger French sailing ships. Recently we have had the disappearance of the *Kobenhavn*, and the other British vessels which we have already mentioned. But it is not to be wondered at when we take into consideration the vast size of the vessels that we have under consideration.

A sailing ship of three or four thousand tons is a very unhandy proposition at the best of times. So it is only natural that if she finds herself out of reckoning in thick weather, embayed, and headed by the wind, that she will take the ground. This is almost a certainty—the vessels are so large that they will not handle easily, and their gear is so heavy that sail trimming cannot be performed in a hurry.

Shipmate Malmsten wishes any of our readers who may care to do so to correspond with him. His address is Fabiola Hospital Association, Oakland, California.

The only thing I do not like about the Log Book of your magazine is that it is not long enough. In the copy of the one before the last that I received I noticed some discussion about the dimensions of the *Benjamin F. Packard*.

Of course, you were right in this case in your conclusions about the correctness of Sandy Wise's figures about the *Packard*. A person would not have to know these figures well at all to know that they were not right. The length of her spars was about the same as those of any ordinary ship. She had six yards on each mast, but ships often would have seven yards.

But I fail to see what all the controversy is about in connection with this data. Because if a man does not know these figures exactly by heart, all he has to do to get them correctly is to refer to the United States register of shipping.

The last writer had the dimensions all correct, although I think that the gross tons, and not the net tons, should be given, unless they are both given. I think in most cases the gross tonnage gives a better idea of a vessel's size.

Now I am going to give the *Packard's* dimensions as they are set forth in a pamphlet entitled "Seagoing Vessels of the United States for the Year 1926." It was published by the department of commerce or bureau of navigation. The *Packard's* gross tonnage was two thousand one hundred and fifty-six, and her net tonnage was two thousand and thirteen. Her length was two hundred and forty-four and two tenths feet, beam forty-three and two tenths feet, and depth eighteen and two tenths feet. You will see that she is nowhere near three hundred and forty feet long.

She was built in 1883—not in 1886—by Goss, Sawyer & Packard, of Bath, Maine. No doubt she was a good vessel, but she was not an outstanding one, as the amount of publicity she got lately would lead one to believe. There were a great many vessels of her type, from eighteen hundred to twenty-six hundred tons, built in the '80s in Bath and elsewhere in New England.

I lived in Bath at that time and could name a great many, and I know many of the details of their construction. And without trying to be too exact I will state that if one should look carefully in the registers of that period he

would, I feel quite sure, find more than twenty-five vessels—all with three masts—of greater tonnage than the *Packard*—and they were all built in Maine. There were a number of them built in the '80s, and many before then.

The *Liverpool* that you speak of as having three masts is a vessel which, I believe, had four, unless the two different pictures that I have of her are wrong. Of course, there might have been two *Liverpools*, and if that is the case you might be right. I am sending you a picture of the *Liverpool*.

I am a collector of pictures of sailing ships and steamers, and if any of the readers of your magazine should care to swap pictures with

me I will be very glad to hear from them. I have quite a good collection of pictures of sailing vessels, all post-card size, although some are larger. There are quite a number of American ships that I am anxious to get photographs of.

If any one has pictures of the *Kennebec*, *John R. Kelly*, *Henry B. Hyde*, *Nellie Rosenfeldt*, *John Rosenfeldt*, *Hagerstown*, *Baring Bras*, *Parker W. Whitmore*, *Com. J. H. Allen*, *Frederick Billings*, *S. P. Hitchcock*, I would like to hear from him.

I always look forward to your magazine with a good deal of interest.

HENRY G. MALMSTEN.

## THE NEXT VOYAGE

*In Sea Stories for June*

### Tired Men

By FRANK H. SHAW

McAllister and Lexholme were old men, too old to be useful, Gedge thought, so he retired them from his employ. But the old men could run their own vessel if others didn't want them, and they followed the sea for pleasure rather than profit—until the night the *Felsted* went ashore, when Gedge learned something to his advantage as a shipowner.

### A Passage in Windsor Park

By G. F. SOUTHALL

Mr Southall, in one of his dogwatch yarns, takes the reader back to the early years of this century in the colonial trade. From the head of Spencer's Gulf—where he signed in the *Windsor Park*—to Falmouth, he goes over the old route around the Horn, so well remembered by many of our readers.

### Fresh-water Lubbers

By ROBERT L. ALLEN

Captain Hall didn't like the engineers he had in the *Keyport*. But by the time his ship crossed the war zone he realized that a man can learn tricks on river steamers that will come in handy in deep-water ships—especially those built in wartime.

#### Other Features—

The conclusion of our serial "Coast of the Lost," by Charles Rodda; "Off Ascension," by Lawrence G. Green; "One Man's Meat," by John T. Rowland; and "Neptune Deals a Hand," by Raleigh E. Ross. There is also the usual interesting Log Book, with its entries by passengers and crew.

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